

# Industrial Worker

March 1995

#1577, vol. 92 no. 3

EDUCATION

ORGANIZATION

EMANCIPATION

*Don't Let Them Steal Your Life...*

## Strike Against Forced Overtime

The U.A.W. campaign for new hires, the end of out-sourcing, and a normal work day continues. As we go to press the U.A.W. Delco East local in Flint MI. has just voted to accept a local agreement. The local of some 4,600 workers went on strike at 10:00 p.m. on January 16th. Within 24 hours the strike at the vital G.M. part facility began affecting production at other key G.M. production facilities.

The strikers' demands echoed demands put forth by other locals since the signing of the national U.A.W./G.M. agreement nearly a year ago. Since that agreement, reached in February of last year, strikes at parts and production facilities in Louisiana, Indiana and Michigan have demanded: (1) New permanent employees be hired, (2) An end to out-sourcing of jobs previously done by U.A.W. workers, and (3) An end to the grueling overtime schedule most G.M. workers have been forced to experience.

G.M.'s Truck and Bus production facility in Pontiac was forced to shut down production within 24 hours of the walk-out at Delco East, for lack of parts. By the weekend 10 plants had closed for lack of parts, idling 40,000 workers.

If the strike had not been settled, several other G.M. plants would quickly have been forced to close for the duration of the strike. The Delco East facility produces parts for Ford and Chrysler as well as G.M.. Ford spokesmen acknowledged that the strike would start affecting its production within a week. Chrysler, on the other hand,

remained tight-lipped on when the strike would impact its operations.

This strike follows on the heels of the highly publicized and successful strike last October, at G.M.'s Buick City facility in Flint. That strike was successful in getting 500 new permanent production workers added to the payroll. The Delco East strikers were also demanding the addition of 500 new employees, as well as controls on overtime and out-sourcing.

The settlement provides for 70 immediate new hires, and 600 plus workers over the next year. G.M. also agreed to restrictions on outsourcing, and pledged to invest \$72 million in the plant.

Workers are upbeat about the settlement despite G.M.'s record of violating hiring pledges in the area. When asked what they'd do if G.M. reneged, one worker told the *Industrial Worker*: "Then we'll just have to strike again."

The rapid impact the strike has had on G.M.'s Truck and Bus Facility is obviously of primary importance. Every truck that rolls off of that facilities production line is practically sold the moment it is completed. G.M. cannot currently produce enough trucks to satisfy demand. Production being interrupted at this key cash cow undoubtedly resulted in the rapid manner in which G.M. proposed terms to the strikers.

Several other G.M. facilities remain without local agreements, and some of these have the same capacity of impacting the entire G.M. production system. These include powertrain manufacturing centers and engine stamping plants.

This guerrilla struggle utilizing local strike actions rather than a national strike, are proving to be quite successful during the current auto sales boom. In effect the U.A.W. is demonstrating that it also can play the "whipsaw" game that G.M. utilized successfully in the past.

Despite these current successes, the long-term situation at G.M. remains grim. G.M. is the least efficient of the American auto producers. They continue to maintain that they will continue the downsizing be-

## Firestone Strikers Need Solidarity!

One local has abandoned the picketlines, and the United Rubber Workers' 6-month-old strike against the transnational Bridgestone-Firestone tire company is faltering. Firestone has been able to keep production going with nonunion plants, scabs, and imports from foreign plants.

Only solidarity can win the strike now. Autoworkers at Ford's St. Paul Assembly Plant have circulated petitions demanding that their union stand behind striking rubber workers, instead of scabbing on them by installing Firestone tires on new vehicles.

"How can anybody win this way?" wondered rivetline utility worker Kathy Francis as she watched a truck being driven away on Firestone tires. "The union has to start fighting back again," she said as she and others on lunchbreak lined up to sign a petition calling for UAW direct action.

The petitions hit the floor a day after Bridgestone-Firestone began replacing strikers with scabs and are addressed to UAW president Owen Bieber and UAW Vice President Ernie Lofton. The petitions say "The undersigned members of UAW Local 879 demand that you take immediate steps to support our brothers and sisters on strike and who are now being replaced with scabs at Bridgestone-Firestone, and; that this support include the demand that the Ford Motor Company cease all use of Bridgestone-Firestone products in Ford assembly plants. Should Ford refuse this demand we insist that you organize to stop Ford production through "inside strategies" and/or strikes."



gun nearly a decade ago, with plans to continue scrapping facilities and eliminating thousands of jobs.

The current auto sales boom has put those plans on hold. Auto sales are cyclical with sales booms followed by sales busts. Currently sales analysis predict that the boom is ending, stable sales through 95, and the bust coming in 96.

G.M. has demonstrated that they are masters of the whipsawing technique, and one can easily guess that the militant U.A.W. locals in Michigan, Indiana and Louisiana will have their heads on the chopping block during the next round of negotiations.

The U.A.W. is faced with an enormous challenge over the next two years. Will it be capable of generating the necessary union wide solidarity to resist G.M.'s economic demands? Or will the union locals that fed the concession drive of the '80s sell their co-workers out again?

## The Ultimate Labor Concession: Free

Union leaders who promote concessions to stay "competitive" should get ready to work for free.

Tiered wages, endless overtime, straight time weekends, collapsed classifications, outsourcing, the "empowerment" swamp of jointness, are kidstuff next to what Fiat has extracted from its Italian workers.

According to the Dec. 30, 1994 *New York Times*, autoworkers at Fiat's Termoli, Italy engine plant will begin working Saturdays for free. That's Saturdays not at straight time but zero time. No pay whatever.

Last fall Fiat notified the autoworkers that "to remain competitive, workers would have to work on Saturdays, but without pay. For the many workers who had already been working Saturdays but getting overtime pay, it meant an effective pay cut of about 25 percent. In exchange, Fiat said, Termoli would get \$250 million of investment, 400 jobs and an assured future."

If the workers turned down free Saturdays, Fiat said they would close the plant and move the work to Poland "where wages are low and people are hungry for work."

On Dec. 2 65 percent of the workers voted against the proposal. Chided by the government and their union, the workers

*continued on page 6*

## UK IWW Couriers Union

### The Union and You

Judging by the response from previous leaflets there are a great deal of couriers who support the idea of a union.

If all those people got involved we would be holding branch meetings in the Albert Hall instead of in a room above a pub! There is great potential here for couriers to get together to get better pay and conditions. United we stand or divided we fall, and all that.

In case you don't already know, this union is run by couriers for couriers. There is no bureaucracy to sustain so monthly dues are probably the cheapest in Britain. All despatch riders, cycle couriers and van drivers are welcome to join. We don't care if you are self employed or PAYE, temporary or permanent, black or white, follow Arsenal or Spurs. If you are a worker you should join the Union. Simple as that.

Branch meetings at 7 p.m. on the last Tuesday of every month at the Railway Tavern, York Way, Kings Cross, London N1.

All couriers welcome. For more information phone the IWW Couriers Union "Hotline" on 0171 358 9124. A union organised by the Industrial Workers of the World, c/o Hackney Trade Union Support Unit, 10a Bradbury Street, London N16 8SN.

E-mail should go to kevin.brandstatter@bbsrc.ac.uk

### Chicago Bike Messengers

Bike messengers need a union. And Chicago Wobblies are fanning the flames. Leaflets are circulating and a 'zine is in the works. For information write C.D., 1573 N. Milwaukee #497, Chicago IL 60622



## LETTER: IWW Organizing in Yellowstone Park

Fellow Workers,

Attention Wobblies! I am in need of information about the activities of Wob organizers or workers on the picket lines of the action for the culinary and hotel workers in Yellowstone National Park in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

I am an old-time Wob and was working for newspapers up in the area at the time and remember reading reports of the strike and demonstrations up in West Yellowstone, Montana, just outside the west gate of the Park at the time.

The movement went on for several weeks, until the pigs called in the fire departments from West Yellowstone and (I think) Bozeman, Montana, to wash us out and break the strike.

Any Wobs out there who remember the proceedings or the FW organizers of the action, please contact me. It was covered by the *National Guardian*, among others. Any reports, newspaper clippings or other mementos are very welcome.

Please send them to me at PO Box 4056, Jackson WY 83001, or call me collect at 307/733-4553.

Yours for One Big Union,  
Jack Langan, X326746

I made it back from San Francisco, Union property largely intact, stomach growling after four days of fast food on the road, and head throbbing from an overdose of information about IWW office procedures. Thanks to FWs Rush and Meyers for putting me through the paces and for being available to answer questions by phone when I forget. Thanks to Robert, Bill, Harry, Louis, Franklyn, Deke, Dave, and Kim for their time on packing and loading; and to Harry for giving me a place to crash.

Deke showed me the way to Santa Cruz and I enjoyed meeting several branch members at a relocation party for Tai Miller. FW Israel Zuckerman let me rest my weary head on his comfortable couch. On returning from Israel's for a planned breakfast with Tai and Deke, I got lost. After wandering around for a couple of hours I did stumble across the bus station, and returned to SF. My apologies to the SC folks for my ineptness and lack of communication which had them checking hospitals and jails for a missing GST. (Some members might have thanked you if I had remained lost.)

On the road back to Ypsilanti, I saw the southwest for the first time and was brought close to tears by the natural beauty of Arizona and New Mexico, and for opposite reasons by the miles of neon signs in Amarillo. The trip gave me a chance to talk to a lot of good folks masquerading as gas station attendants, motel clerks, waitresses, and truck drivers. While I have no regard for

## From the desk of...

the U.S. government, there are good reasons to love this country's people and geography.

We found an office. The address is 103 W. Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti, MI, 48197; phone 313-483-3548, fax 313-483-4050, email (as soon as I get the password from Deke) iww@igc.apc.org. Meanwhile I can still be emailed at 73174.77@compuserve.com. The office will be staffed roughly from 10am-5pm Mon-Fri and 10am-3pm Saturday, EST; but someone will often be there at other hours as the need arises. And I'm checking the voice mail regularly; so call whenever and I'll get back to you asap.

We, the S.E. Michigan GMB, are pretty excited about the office. It's a store front on Ypsi's main drag. It has a couple of offices plus a large front area which will be great for meetings, library, display, etc. We're still coming up with ideas as we shuffle and unload boxes. It seems to have revitalized the branch. Voluntarism and IW distribution are up.



IWW headquarters loaded and ready to roll. Pictured are FWs Chase, Nihilson, Siitonen and Devore.

Relocating is a major pain. Murphy's law applies. Slowly but surely it's all coming together. Given forbearance from the membership for a couple more weeks, by that time I should have reached an efficiency approaching that of FW Rush.

My first lesson as GST is that you can please some of the people some of the time, period. I seem to be stepping on toes left and right, without meaning to. Keep those cards, letters, calls and e-mails coming. I'll consider the criticism and modify my direction if it seems appropriate or try to explain my position if I don't feel I can change it. If we don't agree, it doesn't mean I view you as the enemy, and I hope the reverse is also true.

*continued on page 10*

## Industrial Worker

### THE VOICE OF REVOLUTIONARY UNIONISM

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Articles not so designated do not  
represent the official position of  
IWW. No ads. Donations welcome.

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## I.W.W. DIRECTORY

Job Branch= 5 or more members in workplace  
GMB=General Membership Branch IU=Industrial  
Union Del=Delegate

GOC= Organizing Committee.

IU 120: Forest Workers  
IU 450: Print & Publishing Workers  
IU 460: Food Processing Workers  
IU 510: Marine Transport Workers  
IU 610: Health Workers  
IU 620: Education Workers  
IU 630: Entertainment Workers  
IU 660: General Distribution Workers  
IU 670: Public Service Workers

### AUSTRALIA

#### NEW SOUTH WALES

Sydney Area Group- Del: Ray Elbourne, Corner  
Dittons Ln. & Old Illawara Hwy, Sutton Forest  
NSW 2577.

### CANADA

#### MANITOBA

Winnipeg GMB- B. Mackay, PO Box 3204,  
GNPO, R3C 4E7

#### ONTARIO

Ottawa GMB- 388 1/2 Kent, K2P 2A9. 613/  
231-2922 <indwrk@web.apc.org>  
Toronto Group- 11 Andrews Ave M6J 1S2. 416/  
941-9945 Meets 1st Thurs 7 pm; phone for  
location.

### UNITED KINGDOM

GOC British Isles/IU620- F. Lee, Secular Hall  
75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1 1WB.  
0533-661835

London Group and Couriers Union- 10a  
Bradbury Street, London N16 8JN. Couriers  
Union Hotline 071 358 9124

Oxford Group & Oxford Claimants and Unem-  
ployed Workers Union- East Oxford Commu-  
nity Centre, Princes Street  
Central Scotland IWW and Postal Workers- PO  
Box 1094, Glasgow G14 0EL

IU610 Contact: Harry Girling, c/o Ipswich  
Community Resource Ctr, 16 Old Foundry Rd.,  
Ipswich IP4 2DU

IU660 Contact: Ray Carr, 22 Brunswick Square,  
Herne Bay, Kent CT6 5QF

Swindon Region GMB/IU670- Del: Kevin  
Brandstatter, 9 Omdurman St. Swindon, SN2  
1HA; Tel: 0793-610707.

Somerset- Davey Garland, Box23, 5 High St.  
Glastonbury Somerset.

### UNITED STATES

#### CALIFORNIA

Mendocino- Bill Meyers, del. 707/884-1818.  
San Diego Group- PO Box 49735, San Diego  
92159. 619/284-WOBS  
Santa Cruz GMB- PO Box 534, 95061

<sciww@ucsc.ucsc.edu>

IU450 New Earth Press Job Shop- 1921 Ashby  
Berkeley 94703 (510)549-0176

IU620 Job Shop UCB Recyclers- 620 Eshleman  
B'k'ly 94720 Daniel Widener

IU670 Berkeley Recycling Ctr. Job Shop- M.  
Carlstroem, 2515 Piedmont #8, 94607

Los Angeles GMB- Meets 2nd, 4th Sundays.  
Location call (24hr): 213/368-4604. Andrew  
Willett 1724 Westmoreland Blvd., LA 90006.

IU630 Film Workers- Miguel Sanchez, 1724  
Westmoreland Blvd. LA 90006 213/368-4604

SF Bay Area GMB- PO Box 40485, 94140 415/  
863-WOBS

### COLORADO

IU450 P&L Printing Job Shop- 2298 Clay,  
Denver 80211. 303/433-1852

Denver/Boulder GMB- 2412 E. Colfax, 80206.  
Ofc hrs Sat. 9-12. (303)388-1065 Meets 1st  
Thurs. 7pm. Del: Cliff Sundstrom 910 E. 8th

Av. #202, 80218. 303/832-7602. Brendan  
Ruiz, POB 370663, 80237-0663

### GEORGIA

Atlanta Group- 340 Elmira Pl, 30307. 404/  
524-1243. Lorenzo Ervin Kom'boa, del. - 218  
Adair Ct. #5, Decatur GA 30030. 404/687-8324

### HAWAII

O'ahu GMB- POB 11928, Honolulu 96822  
Tel: 808/247-8584. <annies@igc.apc.org>

### ILLINOIS

Chicago GMB- 4043 N. Ravenswood #205  
60613. (312)549-5045. Meets 1st Fri. 7:30 pm.

### LOUISIANA

Baton Rouge Group- Steve Donahue 729  
Bungalow Ln 70802. (504)389-9572.

### MARYLAND

Baltimore GMB- R. Bey, Black Shield, Box  
1681, Glen Burnie 21060. 301/367-3024

### MASSACHUSETTS

IU630 GOC- Jim Barclay, 75A Elm St.  
Worcester 01609

### MICHIGAN

SE Mich. GMB- 103 W. Michigan Ave.,  
Ypsilanti 48197. 313/483-3548

IU630 Workers Stories Workers Lives Job Shop-  
Albert Parsons (313)769-0695

IU670 Ann Arbor Tenants Union Job Shop-  
4001 Michigan Union, Ann Arbor 48109. 313/  
763-6876.

### MINNESOTA

Duluth Group- 1514 N. 8th Avenue E, 55805.  
Del: Jack Rosenquist

### MISSISSIPPI

Gulfport Group- C.G. Streuly 601/896-3515

### MONTANA

Butte- Mark Ross 111 W. Quartz 59701.  
(406)782-4465

### NEW YORK

IU670 Socialist Party USA Natl Office Job Shop-  
516 W. 25th St. #404, NYC 10001. 212/691-0776

Capital District Group- POB 74, Altamont NY  
12009. (518)861-5627

Rochester- Del: Ric Garren, 716/232-4005

NYC GMB- Del: Wade Rawluk, 5610 Netherland  
Ave #4D, Bronx NY 10471. 718/796-3671.

Rochelle Semel, RD 1 Box 158-B, Hartwick  
13348. 607/293-6489

### PENNSYLVANIA

IU630 Boulevard Bingo Job Shop- Tina Gaffney  
(215)821-5622

Lancaster Group- PO Box 2084, 17608

Lehigh Valley GMB- POB 4133 Bethlehem  
18018 (610)515-0181. Del: Trish D'Amore 434-  
0128. email: len.flank@father.com

Reading Group- PO Box 8468, 19603.  
Del: Dennis Good (215)921-2459; Rick Page  
(215)562-3487

Philadelphia GMB/IU450 Duplicators Network-  
4722 Baltimore Ave. 19143. (215)747-0855.

IU660 Wooden Shoe Books Records Job Shop-  
112 S. 20th St. 19103. (215) 569-2477.

<ulrike@templevm.bitnet>

### SOUTH CAROLINA

IU450 Harbinger Publications Job Shop- Merll  
Truesdale, 18 Bluff Rd. Columbia 29201. 803/  
254-9398

### TEXAS

Austin Group- PO Box 49523, 78765. 512/  
416-9619

Houston Group- PO Box 981101, 77098.

### UTAH

Salt Lake Branch- Tony Roehrig, PO Box 520514,  
Salt Lake City 84152-0514. 801/485-1969

### VERMONT

Burlington Group- Anne Petermann, Orin  
Langle POB 804, 05402. (802)658- 2403.

<peacejustice@igc.apc.org>

### WASHINGTON

IU460 Fairhaven Co-op Flour Mill Job Shop-  
1115 Railroad Ave. Bellingham 98225.

Industrial Transportation Project- Arthur Miller,  
POB 5464, Tacoma 98415-0464

Stan Anderson, delegate- POB 20402, Seattle  
98102. 206 367-0477

### WISCONSIN

IU450 Lakeside Press Job Shop- 1334  
Williamson, Madison 53703 608/255-1800.

Delegate: Jerry Chernow

Madison GMB- Box 2605, 53701. (608)  
255-1800. Del: Tim Wong, Jerry Chernow



## Puget Sound Area Branch Chartered

Fellow Workers in the Puget Sound area of Washington state have organized a new IWW Branch. This is the only IWW branch now organized in the state, and hopefully marks the beginning of a Wobbly resurgence in an area once denounced as the "Soviet of Washington" because of its strong IWW presence.

## Chicago to Join May Day Actions

The Chicago General Membership Branch has endorsed Neither East Nor West's call for international demonstrations against the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for May Day, 1995 (See January *Industrial Worker* for the call). The Branch is seeking an appropriate site for the demonstration, and will write Latin American and other solidarity groups inviting their participation.

Branch members are also planning a series of cultural and educational events for this Spring. In January IWW member Abraham Bassford spoke to the College of Complexes, a weekly lecture series, on the economic situation of U.S. workers. Jon Bekken has been invited to speak to the group March 18th on the 90th anniversary of the IWW. And an exhibit, "Expressions in the Dance of Life," at Northwestern University's Dittmar Gallery featured the work of IWW artist Carlos Cortez. The Gallery director described Fellow Workers Cortez as "the most important Mexican American political artist alive today."

IWW members continue organizing efforts among bike messengers and at an office supplies factory where workers are forced to work 72-hour weeks (see last month's paper for one worker's account). And Branch members have agreed to take on the mailing of the *Industrial Worker* for the next few months.

## San Francisco Hall

With IWW headquarters packed up and trucked from San Francisco to Ypsilanti, Michigan, the San Francisco General Membership Branch has moved up in the world. Their new office is in room 616 of Grant Hall (1095 Market Street, San Francisco 94103; 415/863-WOBS). The office will serve as a basis for efforts to organize temporary workers, and to support IWW outreach efforts in the Bay area. The office will initially be open Thursdays from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Additional and evening hours will be announced.

## Around Our Union

### GEB Member Hit in Police Gay Bashing

IWW General Executive Board member Deke Nihilson was among 12 people arrested at a New Year's eve benefit party when San Francisco police broke in without warning, arresting the organizers and other participants.

The doors were closed and the party was winding down when some 40 police officers stormed the party at 4 a.m., hurling anti-gay and AIDS-phobic remarks. By 5 a.m. 12 persons were arrested, many with visible injuries. Organizers had been led to believe that everything was in order by visiting police at 2 a.m.

Hundreds of people were at the benefit for Visual Aid, an organization committed to providing ailing artists with the space and materials and support needed to continue making art as long as possible, when police broke in.

Police claimed they were after illegal alcohol sales. But they arrested servers at the two bars and confiscated the cash in the till even though the bars served only fruit juice. Police also confiscated funds from donation boxes at the entrance, as well as sound equipment (much of it rented), computers, and other equipment.

After police arrested the host and ordered the party stopped, they started hitting, brutalizing and arresting people. Many of the officers covered or hid their badges.

Criminal charges for alleged possession of marijuana, possession of narcotics, disorderly conduct, and obstructing/resisting a police officer were dismissed Jan. 6 prior to the arraignment of Joseph Cain, a guest at the AIDS benefit. Police were unable to present any evidence to support their allegations.

Cain was attempting to read the badges of the officers and asking "Why are your badges not properly displayed?" when he was violently arrested. He was placed in a choke hold by police while clearly repeating, "I am not resisting arrest." Several eyewitnesses corroborate his story.

The police action has received intense criticism in local papers.

## Education Workers Organise in Edinburgh

As the *Industrial Worker* went to print news came from our friends across the water of an ambitious organising drive in the city of Edinburgh. A small but expanding group of workers in all walks of education were planning to disseminate 6000 IWW leaflets among fellow workers at further education colleges and university campuses. The aim of the drive is to set up a functioning local branch of EWIU 620 based around the following demands:

- A 15% across the board pay rise to workers and a 15% hike in students' grants;
- An increase in paid holidays for non teaching staff to match the 11 weeks enjoyed by teaching staff;
- Building towards a work-to-rule (e.g. no education worker doing unpaid overtime at home);
- The restoration of welfare benefit entitlement for students;
- A broad reduction in the work week and the work day with no loss of pay.

The education industry in the UK is under great strain and faces a tremendous crisis. Over the past fifteen years the Government, which wants further education to be a preserve of the elite and seeks the imposition of market principles in all walks of life has made the education industry difficult to work in and learn in.

College and universities now work on the principle of the money following the student, therefore all institutions compete against one another to get the maximum number of students through the gates. This has led to a number of absurdities: Universities advertise on TV for students; universities merge and buy one another out; classes become so big that lecture theatres are unable to cope. Students now have to borrow money from the state to receive a dubious education and more and more courses are being laid on which benefit the employers rather than the students themselves.

Workers and students face a number of attacks. In order to build up profit centres managers have been taking control of collective bargaining and pulling out of national agreements, choosing to deal with their local unions instead. The lecturers are experiencing intensification of work and are losing tenured status. There has been a dramatic growth in the number of those on short term contracts with few benefits, while the number involved in facilities management and in senior positions has increased. Some universities are looking to Chief Executives to help them along the road to the capitalist wonderland, and this they are doing while bringing some of their shadier practices with them. At least two universities have had to retire their CEOs early because of financial impropriety.

The life of students has become quite miserable, profit seeking has driven up rents at campus accommodation and at the same time the rights to social security have been curtailed. Means testing of parents is making it almost impossible for working class students to get a higher education but many still try because with youth unemployment at an all time high and no benefit at all being available for 16 and 17 year olds the alternative is even worse.

The business unions are in a mess. In Scotland the unions are split into the Education Institution of Scotland/College Lecturers Association; the Scottish Further and Higher Education Association, the Association of University Teachers (also active in England) and UNISON, the 1.4m "strong" public service union. Other unions are also involved in one way or another. In England along with the AUT and UNISON there is the National Association of Teachers in

Further and Higher Education, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers and the Manufacturing, Science and Finance Union. Some efforts have been made towards business union unity but these fail because a single union would leave fewer jobs for the bureaucrats than a number of unions. There are also class perceptions involved because the AUT sees itself a cut above the rest!

Is there room for the IWW in all this? Undoubtedly! The IWW is probably the only organisation in the educational industry to able to provide a cogent and clear analysis of what is going on and why and the only organisation seeking to break down the artificial divide between teaching and non teaching staff and promote the solidarity of workers. The business unions are too busy stitching up deals to ensure that one group of workers stays ahead of another rather than analysing the pay system in education for what it is — a crude analogy of the class system. The very actions of the unions seek to reinforce the system rather than take it on. The IWW is not averse to taking the system on and will do so.

## Bingo Workers' Organizer in Court

The trial of IWW organizer Lenny Flank on libel charges stemming from the IWW strike was postponed as the *Industrial Worker* goes to press. The Pennsylvania judge hearing the case has done his best to keep the bogus libel suit from being tossed into the rubbish bin where it belongs. Allied Air Force, operators of Lehigh Valley's Boulevard Bingo hall, claims that a press release on the National Labor Relations Board's decision to file unfair labor practices against AAF somehow damaged their scabby reputation.

Allied has asked the judge to ban any mention of unfair labor practices during the trial. One of the key elements to the defense is that Allied is guilty of illegal labor practices, and therefore the alleged defamatory statements are substantially true.

Allied has refused to provide any of the documents which FW Flank requested under discovery, and the judge has refused to make Allied produce these documents. The judge has also blocked efforts to have Allied's lawyer subpoenaed as a witness in the case (to testify about false statements he made to the newspaper). Two weeks before the trial was set to begin, the judge dismissed Flank's countersuit charging Allied with defamation and racketeering.

FW Flank has filed an appeal with the Pennsylvania Superior Court, where he hopes to get the judge's rulings reversed (and possibly even get a summary ruling in his favor since the bingo hall never answered his lawsuit). As the *Industrial Worker* goes to press the case is expected to go to trial in mid-February.

"We are pretty sure we can present a good defense to the bingo hall's suit and are not all that concerned about losing," Flank says. "But we were looking forward to pressing a countersuit that would win some money for the union (and for me) out of this."

The Lehigh Valley Branch is preparing additional lawsuits against Allied on behalf of the LV Branch and the fired workers (wrongful dismissal, breach of contract, RICO, violation of public policy, fraud, etc.). They need to raise funds for the lawyer, deposition costs and filing fees. So keep those donations to the Legal Defense/Offense Fund (PO Box 4133, Bethlehem PA 18018) coming.

## PREAMBLE TO THE IWW CONSTITUTION

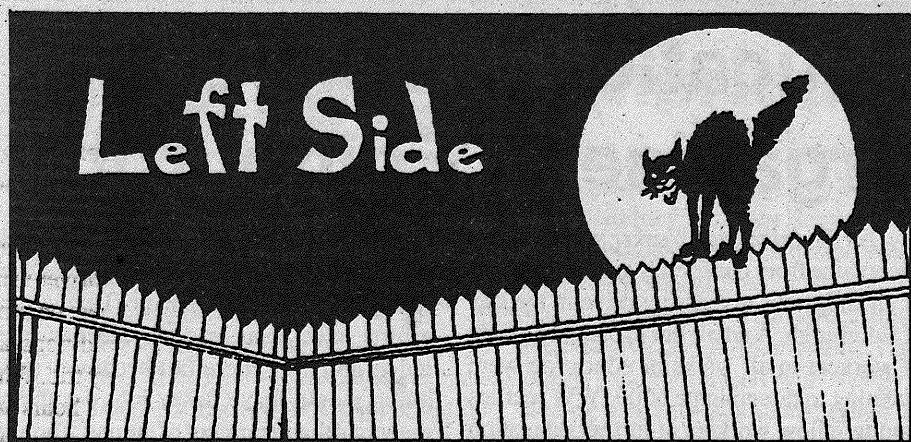
The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interests of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all.

Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system." It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with the capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.





Some years back, during the tumultuous Sixties when all the protest was going on against the war in Viet Nam, your not-so-humble scribe along with a few other Wobs was partaking in a group that named itself the Chicago Peace Coalition. This group was composed of diverse elements ranging from college students and liberal do-gooders to die-hard old leftists. The general aim was how best to voice disapproval against the war and how to swell the ranks of the protesters.

One of the concerns was how to deal with harassment and outright repression from the forces of law and order. There was one tall dude who identified himself as a Cuban who kept suggesting to fight the cops back. Most of us older hands realized that meeting violence from the police with our own violence would not only be ineffectual at best, but at worst give the boys in blue the excuse to really lay it on heavy. We felt obligated to caution some of the more headstrong younger element that this dude was in all probability a police or government agent.

I remember my worthy predecessor whose inspiration influenced me to eventually become a Wob telling that whenever some newly lined up "fellow worker" kept talking up violence in a strike situation, it was assumed that this fellow worker was either a plant from the government or from the employer. (Basically not that much difference between the two!) A good part of the history of difficulty that our organization had to endure was having to be alert to agents provocateurs in our midst whose function it was to sow distrust within our ranks.

Such was also the case with organizing drives in other union organizing situations. It was seen again during the heyday of the Civil Rights movement and they also did their best to sow distrust among the American Indian Movement. When it began to appear that there was not too much difference between the aims of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, and in fact the two were coming closer together, those in high places came to the conclusion that those two "should not suffer to live."

It is now quite obvious that the so-called contract of Malcolm's daughter on the life of Louis Farakhan is another set-up to sow dissension among the Black population of Freedomland. Your scribe is happy to observe that the Black population is not taking the bait. Our manipulators will stop at nothing to throw the monkey wrench into any organizing efforts on the part of the people, and there are times when their underhanded efforts stick out like a sore appendage. When such moves become so obvious it is evidence that those in high places are really running scared, so take heart!

The politicians of Freedomland used to prattle about the "evil empire" some years back, but now that said evil empire is bombing the hell out of Chechnia, these polities seem to be taking a kid gloves approach. Do they too have a fear of small break-away nations? Despite the carnage that is taking place in the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, as well as Myanmar (Burma) and other less-publicized areas, there is a note of optimism in that there are a lot of "evil empires" crumbling up around this Earth of ours. A few years ago in an interview in *Playboy* magazine, Marlon Brando predicted that there would be independent American Indian nations. I have to admire the man for his optimism as much as for his acting ability.

Your scribe has just learned that his hometown, Milwaukee, has become another one-newspaper city. The two dailies that this city has had decided to consolidate into one newspaper. The bottom line is that 500 workers are having the tin can tied to their posteriors. So what else is new? Maybe with NAFTA these erstwhile newspeople can migrate to the sunny Southern climes and pick asparagus for two bits an hour.

Meanwhile the ranks of the homeless are swelling everyday and you no longer have to go to skid road to be approached by the panhandlers. We can now do so within the sanctity of our own neighborhoods. People are increasingly more reluctant to make eye-contact with others on the street, and when approached turn away with a look of abhorrence. Methinks that look of abhorrence is not so much for the panhandler as for the realization that their own tenuous employment is the only difference between themselves and the panhandlers.

These are indeed times when the optimism of us radicals is being put to the acid test, but then again how many pessimists can you count among the ranks of the radicals? One fellow worker of mine in particular who lives on the West Coast has initiated a campaign, "Homes For All," in which he proposes an international rent strike for this coming May Day, and if not this one perhaps another May Day. His position, and I heartily agree with him, is that Rent is Theft! No one should pay for the right to live in a house of one's own and there should be an end to the landlord system. I would like to see him become successful in convincing all renters to go on a rent strike and force the landlords to find some other way of making a living. From there it would be a simple matter to convince everyone to go on a general strike and convince the employers to become workers themselves.

But, of course, watch out for the agents provocateurs.

— C.C. Redcloud

## The Ravages of Inflation

As the US Federal Reserve Bank continues raising interest rates in order to head off the threat of inflation, chairman Alan Greenspan claims the official inflation rate is wildly exaggerated.

Greenspan told Congress that the rate doesn't accurately measure the cost of living because it doesn't take into account that fact that people change their behavior when confronted by higher prices. Thus when food prices rise, we buy less expensive food or eat less (since our pay doesn't go up). When confronted with a rent hike we can't pay, we move to cheaper digs or hit the streets. When the cost of heating oil rises we turn down the thermometer. If we don't, and we can't pay, they cut off the heat and we freeze to death. Either way, Greenspan says, our cost of living doesn't go up. Indeed, by the time we freeze to death, half-starved in our cardboard boxes on the street, our cost of living is down to almost nothing.

Based on this reasoning, Greenspan argues that there is no need to peg Social Security pensions, federal paychecks, etc. to inflation. (The feds claim inflation ran at a relatively modest 2.6 percent last year, prices went up faster than that in the stores I frequent.) Instead, people should just tighten their belts.

Of course, those belts are already pretty tight. Wages fall even as unemployment levels decline. Credit card debt soars to unprecedented levels as people desperately strive to keep their heads above water. Growing numbers are buying groceries and other basic necessities on credit.

It's not inflation that's rampaging, it's capitalism.

## An Injury to One

"We have to get back to the concept of the IWW," a locked-out Staley worker says in the Jan. 20 *Chicago Reader*. "One big union... We have to break down the walls that divide us... We can't succeed any other way."

The Staley workers recently dumped corporate campaigner Ray Rogers in hopes of getting better support from the AFL-CIO piecards (who hold a grudge because of Rogers' efforts in behalf of the Hormel strikers ultimately sold out by "their" union," the UFCW).

Although there are no IWW members among the A.E. Staley workers (Wobblies are, of course, active in solidarity efforts around the country), the IWW's name and slogans are increasingly common in newspaper accounts and workers' speeches.

Why? Because unlike the class collaborationism and disunity practiced by the AFL-CIO, the IWW's ideas make sense. Our program - One Big Union solidarity across national and industrial boundaries, direct action (rather than reliance on labor laws, arbitrators, etc.), and direct workers' control of our unions and, ultimately, of the economy - is modern and up to date. It speaks to the real problems that confront workers around the world.

This was clear 90 years ago, when militant unionists gathered in Chicago to draft the Industrial Union Manifesto calling the founding convention of the Industrial Workers of the World.

At the time, business unionists and labor politicians maintained that we were ahead of our time. Perhaps so, though I suspect a great deal of human suffering could have been avoided through our One Big Union program. Today we need the IWW more than ever.

## Towards the 19th Century

One hundred and ten years ago, workers were in the midst of a major campaign to win the 8-hour day. Some workers worked 10 hours, others 12, six days a week. It was

a hard-fought battle, but by the early 1900s few workers put in more than a half-day on Saturdays and the 8-hour day was increasingly common.

In the 1930s a 30-hour work week was seriously considered, and several unions (including the United Rubber Workers, now engaged in a desperate last-ditch battle against the tire companies) won it in their contracts.

Today 12-hour days are increasingly common.

In another column, FW Miller takes us to task for sloppy language in discussing shorter hours. He is right, of course, in saying that it is not always possible or desirable to stop work at the end of 8 hours (or 6, or 4). In a crisis it may well be necessary to put in extra hours. And some workers may want or need to concentrate their working hours in a few days or a few months if their job takes them far from their homes.

But this does not affect the fundamental question. While overtime might occasionally be necessary, in the past decade or so the average work week has been growing longer as bosses decide it's cheaper to pay overtime (where they pay overtime at all) than to hire enough workers to do the work.

Meanwhile productivity has been doubling every 25 years or so. Productivity is now twice what it was when the 40-hour week was enacted in the US (decades after it had been won by many workers).

Very little of that productivity went into better working and living standards. Instead our productivity has been poured into soaring numbers of unproductive workers, into skyrocketing salaries for managers, into higher profits. We could implement the 16-hour work week (4-hour day, 4-day week; seafarers and other offsite workers could take the reductions in weeks off) without any cut in our standard of living.

Every unnecessary hour we work is that much less time we have in which to live our lives.

## Innocent, As Charged

A recent 'zine review describes this paper as "a fine worker-oriented publication... Their only shortcoming is that they still believe in the old notion of the class war of workers and employers..." Class warfare may be an old notion, but it is very much with us today (ask the fellow workers in Decatur, or take a look at the Congress). The problem is that the bosses are fighting, and too many workers buy the notion that class struggle is obsolete, and so sit back and let the bosses roll over us.

Not that the IWW "believes in" class warfare; we simply recognize it's reality. But we are one of the few unions in the world that offers a program for putting the class war behind us - organize the workers of the world into One Big Union to take on the bosses, defeat them once and for all, and put this planet under workers' management.

Workers are waking up to the urgent necessity of revolutionary unionism. As I was putting this issue together, a fellow worker who stumbled across the *Industrial Worker* in a bookstore called and told me he had been looking for something like this most his life.

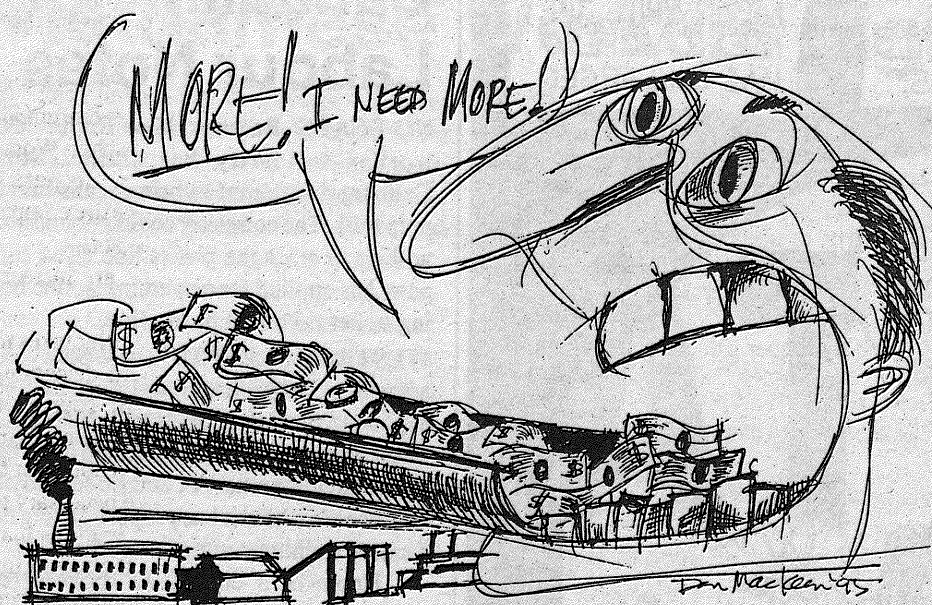
Unfortunately, the *Industrial Worker* is available at only a handful of bookstores, and soon will be available at even less as our largest distributor, Ingram Periodicals, refuses to pay for the papers they sell.

So we need you, our readers, to pick up the slack. *Industrial Worker* bundles are available at reasonable rates, if you can spare a few minutes each month to place the paper in bookstores or other locations where they might reach our fellow workers. Or we can arrange to send papers directly to the stores. If there's a labor event coming up in your area and you can give us a month's notice, we can send a special bundle.

Can we count on you?

[JB]





## That Vanishing Minimum Wage

Consumer advocate Ralph Nader has written House Speaker Newt Gingrich and House Majority Leader Dick Armey asking for an increase in the US minimum wage.

"The lowest-paid workers in the United States continue to lose purchasing power, gradually falling toward and beneath the poverty level as the nominal minimum wage stagnates," Nader said. "The impact ripples across all wage levels because job growth is slower where income gaps are wider."

U.S. Census Bureau statistics show that inflation-adjusted incomes of the highest-paid families in the United States increased 25 percent from 1974 to 1993, while the inflation-adjusted incomes of the lowest-paid families decreased 9 percent during the same period. "The 25 percent increase enjoyed by the most well-paid families would have produced a minimum wage of \$7.03 per hour in 1993, compared to the actual minimum wage of \$4.25," he wrote.

He also chastised Gingrich and Armey for talking of so-called "welfare reform" while a declining inflation-adjusted minimum wage forces more people closer to a poverty level of existence.

From 1974 to 1993, the percentage of families living below the poverty level increased from 9.9 percent to 13.6 percent as the minimum wage (for 40 hours of work per week for 50 weeks per year) fell to \$6,264—below the poverty level for a wage earner supporting a family of four. Adults make up almost 85 percent of the workers that earn the minimum wage or less.

The most recent statistics from *Business Week* show that the average CEO of a major company makes 149 times the average factory worker's pay.

Nader called on Gingrich and Armey to "meet with minimum-wage workers in their homes and at their jobs," to "compare their lives to yours with your six-figure salaries plus pensions and perks," and to "support an increase in the minimum wage so that our lowest-paid workers can end their descent back to 1950s-level (inflation-adjusted) incomes."

Now that Democrats no longer control Congress, the Clinton administration has decided it too will support a higher minimum wage.

## Time for a Shorter Workweek

Employed US workers spend 163 hours more per year working than they did in 1969. An average worker spends 9 hours a week commuting to work and back. Much of this additional work time came at the expense of their families: Americans today are spending 40% less time with their children today than their parents did in 1965. Americans on the average spend 40 minutes a week playing with children.

## Demolish Buildings to Make Money

The IBM site in East Fishkill, New York demolished several buildings last year in order to bring about reductions in its town tax assessment.

We already have plenty of empirical evidence of the irrational character of capitalism. There's the absurdity of millions of people being involuntarily unemployed at the same time that many plants and machinery are kept idle, the gates padlocked. There's the contradiction of having poverty for many, and economic insecurity for many more, even as the gross national product increases each decade in an accelerating fashion. But this latest experience should be enlightening for local residents.

This mild winter has recently turned colder in the New York region, which causes those of us who have shelter to remember the unknown number of homeless people who will freeze to death before springtime appears. I thought of those victims last week, while the cold wind was trying to knock me over as I carried my firewood from the woodshed. I dropped the firewood in the corner of the living room and picked up the newspaper. It said that the local 200-acre IBM plant has razed "tens of thousands of square feet" during the past year.

Homeless people. Wrecking balls turning buildings into vacant lots. Makes sense to me!

The company and its friends also presented the town officials with a warning. If the local politicians, fearful of erosion of their tax base, would like to avoid further bulldozer activity at the plant, they would need to pass some legislation intended to help out this poverty-stricken 4th-largest corporation in the United States. *The Poughkeepsie Journal* (Dec. 31) describes the suggestion as follows: "The proposed East Fishkill legislation provides for a 100 percent tax exemption on improvements for up to seven years. Then taxes would be reduced to 75 percent in the eighth year, 50 percent in the ninth year, and 25 percent in the 10th year."

No one can deny that IBM has "lost" money within the past several years. They call reduced gains a "loss" in corporate euphemism. IBM is paying dividends in the range of 25 cents to 54 cents per quarter, to the dismay of stockholders who had gotten accustomed to receiving \$1.10 per quarter. (Think of it—if a reduction in the rate of gain can be called a "loss," then I would have to say that my own body is shrinking, because I have stopped growing.)

IBM cutbacks surprised some people during 1993-1994. The main job benefit that had always attracted workers to the company was its no-layoff practice, which local people tended to view as a guaranteed job for life. The company abolished its

# Shorter Working Hours

Once again the discussion of hours worked is coming up on the radical labor movement. I am writing this article in the hope that we can direct this discussion into the reality of industry and away from just philosophizing. Let me start with the statement, "working overtime is scabbing on the unemployed." That statement pins the label of scab upon millions of workers who do not deserve to be called a scab.

Let me clue you in, the 8-hour day/40-hour week has never been won industry-wide in the US. Most of these workers are not given any choice when it comes to working overtime.

(1) In industries where workers could be limited to a 40-hour week, they are faced with the problem of how to win the demand of no overtime. Those workers who do belong to unions are faced with being mis-organized, and in some cases the union makes money off them working overtime. In those unions, not only do workers pay a flat rate each month but they also pay a percentage of each hour worked.

Then there is the fact that many unions will not even talk about such things as hours or health and safety. Then there are too many workers who are unorganized, and the unions are either unwilling or unable to organize them. And you cannot win and maintain such demands without organization.

Yes, we radical unionists should take up the issue of hours worked along with many other issues that the piecemeal turn their backs on. And yes, if we could shut down overtime in these industries there would be a lot less unemployment.

(2) In industries where skills must be learned by workers, we must talk about training. Some workers are forced into working overtime because there are not the trained workers around to take their place. The issue of training is not an easy issue. For example, I worked 20 years as a marine pipefitter, the industry standard for training a marine pipefitter is five years. So when a backlog of work comes about the shipyards have a hard time finding pipefitters. You cannot even take what they call commercial pipefitters (those who work on land) and expect them to work on a ship, for there is a hell of a lot of difference between a ship and a building. So if you trained a lot more marine pipefitters so that no overtime is needed, what are you going to do with them when work slacks up? So when talking about hours in these industries you have two more issues to think about, training and slack work times.

(3) There are a number of jobs out there that are either seasonal or short-term work. These workers must make as much work as possible in a short time to live on when they are not working. If you cut out overtime then you will increase their hardships.

(4) Then there are industries where they could not function within an 8-hour day/40-hour week. You would have to build ships bigger, for an example, because you would have to carry a larger crew; same with airplanes and trains. Ask our FWs who work tug boats, should they stop bringing in a ship after their 8 hours are up? Or when a winter storm hits and people lose power, should the line crews quit after 8 hours?

For a number of years I worked ship repair on 250 miles of the Mississippi River, many times it would take two hours or more just to get to the ship, then we would have to ride the ship up or down the river and there are only a few places where we could get off.

no-layoff policy in April of 1993, and its security guards escorted thousands of employees to the nearest exits. By September 1994, there had been 28,000 layoffs worldwide. During 1993-1994, the company completed 9,100 layoffs in the New York Hudson

*continued on page 8*

Are you saying that to keep from being a scab we must jump off the ship after 8 hours and swim to shore?

When I was out driving a long-haul truck, even if you have another driver waiting for me I cannot always be there on time; such things as weather, road conditions and so on may add a lot of time to my trip. What am I to do? Park my truck after 8 hours and wait until the next day? Right now I am working in hazardous material response, transportation and remediation. I am sometimes called out because of an emergency that needs someone who is HazMat Certified and has a CDL Class A license with hazardous material and tanker endorsements. What am I to do when my 8 hours are up and the site is not yet safe, or should I drive hazardous material back to the plant?

(5) Next, there are jobs that an 8-hour day/40-hour week would make unbearable. When I was driving long haul, if I had that I would have to spend even more time sitting around truck stops. Once I almost took a job up in Dutch Harbor, Alaska as a pipefitter on a construction project. Because there was no housing on shore the workers were put up on an old liberty ship. The limitation on hours would have given us even more time wasting in a place we did not want to be.

I could go on and on about the reality of different industries, but I hope that I have made my point. To win the universal 8-hour day/40-hour week means the organization of the working class and dealing with a whole lot of other issues. And in some cases it cannot be done. If I am responding to an emergency spill of some highly toxic chemical, would you have me stop my work or park my tanker truck next to your house because my eight hours are up?

Now there are those who say such things should not be produced, but in today's world I think few truly understand how much toxic compounds are produced. To end toxic production would end the production of most all metals. What do we replace metal with? Plastic? No, toxics are used in that. Wood? Though toxics are used in wood production, it may be possible to remove them; but just think about all the clear cuts we would have to put up with.

There are no easy answers to the problems we face as radical unionists and environmentalists. But if we are to deal with these problems and hope to change things we must learn to do our research so that we fully understand the full scope of the problems and come up with real solutions. Not just things that look good on paper. Let's not be like those who live in a fantasy world and think that they are not contributing to the toxic problem. They will tell you that they are saving Mother Earth by riding their bikes. Take a good look at what that bike is made out of, the list of toxic components would blow you away. Or that they only wear cotton; one could write a book on the harm that cotton production has done to Mother Earth. What we need is an organization like the IWW to take on the hard work of knowing what they are talking about.

As for the 4-hour day/20-hour week, that is the revolution. But to gain that we would have to cut back on production of things we really don't need. I would love to be able to tell people that we can no longer produce their ding-dongs, CDs, cellular phones, PCs, video games and other such decadent junk because there are more important needs to fulfill. Yes, the 4-hour day, along with the seizure of the tools of production and the redirection of industry from production for profit to production for the well-being of all is our goal; this our dream that we carry within our hearts, that should never be compromised or allowed to die out.

— Arthur J. Miller



## After NAFTA

One year ago, the United States Congress approved the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Economic statistics for the first half of the year indicate that the promised economic benefits of NAFTA failed to materialize. What has materialized, however, is the negative consequences predicted by NAFTA's critics.

**Jobs.** According to projections by the Department of Labor, NAFTA was to have created 170,000 new jobs for American workers by 1995. This estimate of job creation was based on a projected increase in the U.S. trade surplus with Mexico from US\$1.7 billion in 1993 to US\$8.5 billion in 1995. For every US\$1 billion increase in net exports, 20,000 jobs would be created.

Contrary to the Labor Department's projection, the trade surplus with Mexico is rapidly disappearing, as are American jobs. In the first half of 1994, more than 27,000 American workers applied for the NAFTA Transitional Adjustment Assistance program, set up to assist workers who lose their jobs as a result of this trade agreement.

**Trade Surplus.** The first six months of NAFTA saw the U.S. trade surplus with Mexico drop by 32 percent, as compared with the first half of 1993. This was due to a sharp increase in Mexican exports, almost all of which were manufactured goods. Automobile trade provides a good example of NAFTA's effects on manufacturing.

While America exported 13,000 automobiles to Mexico in this period, Mexico exported 160,000 cars to America. Most of the Mexican produced cars were American

brands manufactured by Mexican workers, though Nissan, Honda, BMW and other foreign auto corporations are rapidly expanding their operations in Mexico.

These car factories are not being established to produce cars for the small Mexican market, but to take advantage of NAFTA's liberalized trade rules to increase sales in the lucrative U.S. market.

**Investment.** NAFTA's proponents portrayed the agreement as a progressive step toward lowering tariff barriers. But the real intent of the agreement was to protect U.S. investments in Mexico and make it easier for American manufacturers to move their production across the border where they can take advantage of cheaper Mexican labor rates.

In the first half of 1994, foreign investment in Mexico soared 32 percent over the foreign investment rate of the first half of 1993. Sixty percent of this investment came from America. The American capital being

sent to Mexico is capital which could have been invested at home and stimulated economic growth in American communities.

— Ronald Logan

## Strike Hits Belgium Gov't Austerity Bid

No trains. No mail. No planes. 100,000 government workers struck in Belgium Nov. 29 against the government's proposed cutbacks and privatization. In the French-speaking part of the country, radio, television and schools were also struck.

Belgacom, the government-owned telecommunication company, is talking about laying off 40 percent of its workers. The railroads are also planning to slash jobs.

The government says it must reduce social benefits, which are higher in Belgium than in other European countries, to become "internationally competitive." Workers there get a full unemployment check for as long as they are out of a job and can retire between the ages of 55 and 60.

## Indonesians Fight Sweatshop Jobs

Tens of thousands of workers went on strike in March-April of 1993 to demand their employers pay at least the minimum wage. It was the biggest strike wave in the Indonesian history. A strike in the export zone in Medan turned into a series of massive demonstrations after workers found a 22-year old labor organizer, Rusli, beaten and drowned in a local river. One demonstration turned into a bloody riot, which the government used a pretext to crack down on the newly insurgent labor movement.

The wave of strikes succeeded in getting the minimum wage raised to \$1.75 a day from about \$1.50, but attempts to create independent unions face fierce repression. The Indonesian government has jailed dozens of labor activists for leading the protests in Medan. Officials refuse to recognize a nationwide labor union launched in 1992 to challenge the docile All Indonesia Workers Union (SPSI) that has official sanction. (The official union's leader is a businessman who belongs to President Suharto's ruling party.) SBSI leader Muchtar Pakahan currently is on trial and faces a long prison term.

The independent Indonesian Prosperity labor Union, or SBSI organized the strikes which succeeded in bringing the workers up to the regional minimum wage. SBSI claims a half-million workers in 87 branches across the Indonesian archipelago.

Nike is among the largest employers in Indonesia, with about 100,000 workers. It supports the crackdown on SBSI.

## Canadian Labour Notes

**NO SCABS** Bathurst, New Brunswick — worker solidarity has stalled Stone Container's attempt to bring scabs into its pulp mill. The company could not find hires willing to cross the picket line. The company has applied for a court injunction hoping to get rid of the picket line.

**WESTRAY CLEANUP** The Westray Coal Mine in Nova Scotia, closed since the 1991 explosion that killed 26, is to be cleaned up. The contractor said the cleanup will take about three months. A committee studying new uses for the site has proposed using it as a safety training center for workers.

However a committee spokesperson said it was unlikely any companies would be willing to invest in a safety training center for workers, and suggested labor unions might be interested.

(The site already has one use — 11 miners are using it as a grave.)

**CANADA HELPS PROP PESO** Canada will give \$1.5 billion to help Mexico prop up the value of the peso. Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians asks why Canada has the money to give Mexico, but not to fund social programs. Barlow says the social cuts in Canada are driven by the IMF which rules every country. She points out that the combined incomes of Mexico's 5 richest men is equal to the income of 33 million poor Mexicans. Mexican wages fell 60 percent in the last decade of IMF rule.

**BLUE JAYS CAN'T USE SCABS** Ontario's Minister of Labour confirmed last week that the Toronto Blue Jays won't be exempt from a provincial law that bans scab workers during strikes. There's talk owners will use minor league players if the strike isn't settled by next spring.

**BRIDGEHEAD RIPE FOR UNION** Bridgehead, an affiliate of Oxfam, imports coffee and other products from worker co-operatives in Guatemala and Central America, and markets them across Canada. But Bridgehead itself is not a co-op! The Director General gets very defensive when this is pointed out. Some upper managers are also strongly anti-union. Workers at the Ottawa office and warehouse complained recently that management includes no people of color. "But," protested one manager, "we have one of everything!" A fact — one Black person in the store, one Asian in the office, a Hispanic in the warehouse...

A management person acknowledged that the practice of job-rotation had been a great success in the warehouse this year. But when office workers also demanded job-rotation, the manager downplayed the idea. Workers are discontent and ready for a union. But they will probably choose CUPE, which already has some OXFAM organized. CUPE is said to be aware of the situation at Bridgehead.

We hope CUPE will be more assertive here, than they were recently at the British Embassy. Perhaps a little competition from the IWW would help CUPE smell the coffee at Bridgehead.

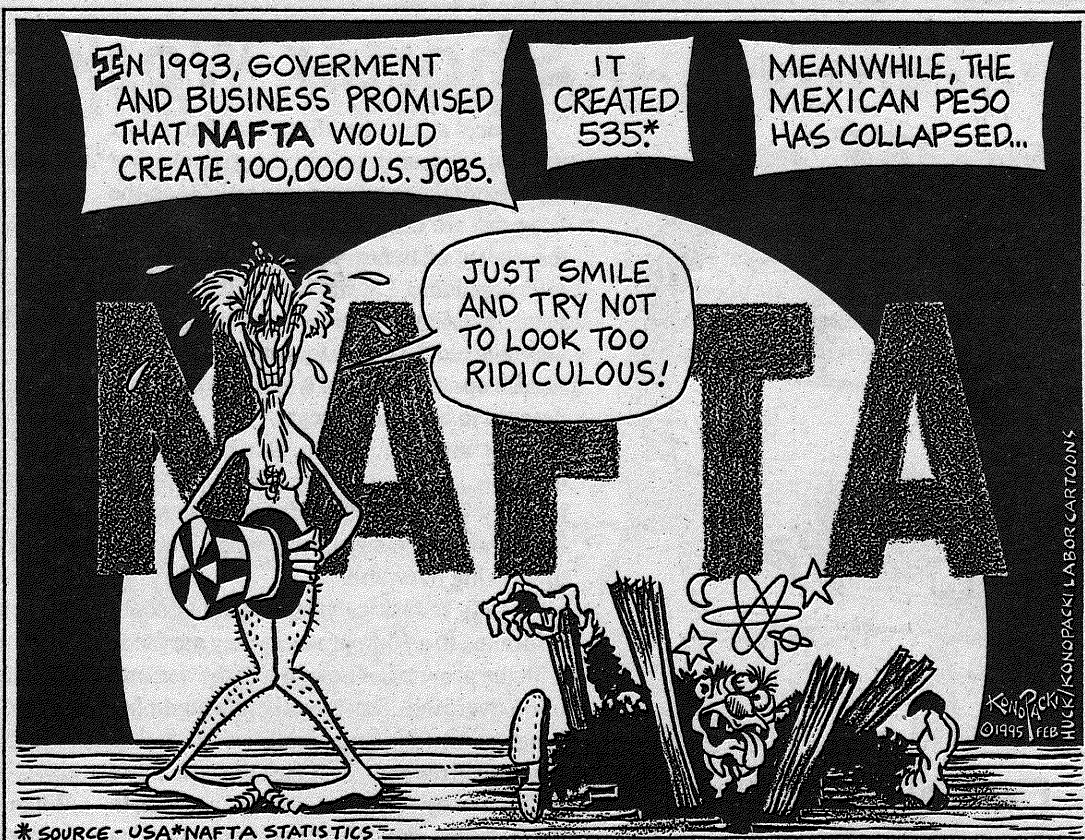
**WARREN CONVICTED** Miner Roger Warren has been convicted of 2d degree murder in the Royal Oaks explosion. (see article last issue) No word on appeal.

CLM/Ottawa

## Work for Free...

voted again on Dec. 16 but not by secret ballot. This time, a show of hands was declared to be 65 percent in favor of free work. Ruggero Nobile, a union rep whom the workers blame for selling out, said the autoworkers "voted no the first time because they did not believe Fiat's threat. This is a strategy of creating labor flexibility that's all over Europe," he said.

— Tom Laney



\* SOURCE - USA\*NAFTA STATISTICS

## Construction Workers Demand Back Wages

Construction workers in Germany have distributed the first issue of a multi-lingual *Building Workers' Newsletter*, calling for construction workers to organize outside of the social-democratic trade unions, which have presided over deteriorating conditions for the past several years.

As European integration proceeds, German contractors are increasingly turning to imported workers. Spanish construction workers at the "Bonum-Immobilien" near Berlin worked for several weeks without getting paid before striking on August 3rd of last year. The workers were employed by the Dutch temporary workers agency Levant, which rented the workers to contractor Wolfgang Sturm. The workers signed contracts with Levant for DM 26 an hour (skilled German construction workers average DM 65 an hour), which then sold their services for DM 40 per hour, pocketing the difference. The work agencies do not pay social insurance taxes, claiming the workers are "self-employed."

The strike ended when the company paid a portion of the back wages. It refused to pay the balance on the grounds that the customer was dissatisfied with the work. The workers were left with just enough money to pay their hotel bills.

Such disputes are increasingly common. The Portuguese company SOMEK got a contract for the Friedrichstadt-Passagen in Berlin's city center. 200 Portuguese building workers worked twelve hours, six days a week. SOMEK has 12,000 Portuguese

workers on building sites in Germany. They get DM 2500 after tax for the six-day week including many hours overtime. A worker with a German passport would get up to DM 6000.

In September 20 Portuguese workers went on hunger-strike in Leipzig because they did not get paid. The workers lived in miserable conditions, three to a container. They worked six days a week, 15 hours a day, for DM 20 an hour.

Italian workers blocked a crane July 4th in Pankow, Berlin to demand payment of their wages. Three months later two cranes were blocked by English building workers demanding the payment of their wages.

There are more than 6,000 British and Irish building workers in Berlin. Many got hired through Dutch work agencies. Workers often are not paid, as subcontractors disappear with their pay packets and work permits. The workers come in search of better wages, but have to work 60 to 70 hours a week for them.

The work agencies charge both the employer who hires the workers and the workers who pay part of their wage for commission. Many work agencies operate illegally and/or do not pay wages, leaving workers to try to survive on their own without money. Many live out of their cars or in so-called cockroach-hotels for DM 100 a week or more. Every month between 100 and 200 turn up at the British Consulate without money or a return ticket to Britain or Ireland.



# Vietnamese Workers Fight Back

As Vietnam moves towards a market economy, "unions" are being forced to move beyond their function as communist party auxiliaries or see workers take matters into their own hands. Vietnamese "unions" are still generally created from the top down.

When a new factory is established the Vietnam Confederation of Trade Union establishes a branch union in that factory. The "union" is more of an official function than a spontaneous action by the workers themselves. The centralized union is, for all intent and purpose, is still a government entity. Thus, it will not support workers if the workers' demands are seen as against the government policy.

However, in Saigon, some "spontaneous" unions now exist – usually in restaurant and hotel industry, where workers just get together and organize a union themselves (and then ask for support from the Confederation). The status of these unions are unclear. But it seems the government tolerates them.

At a foreign-own firms, the union (and thus the Confederation) is under the pressure to prove it is the representative of the workers for workers' interests, and that it is nationalistic, i.e., for Vietnamese workers against foreign owners and can't act like a house servant of the foreign owners.

Nationalism is so powerful in the Vietnamese tradition that the unions (the Confederation and, indirectly, the Party and the government) have to accept labor activities at foreign firms such as strike etc., though there may be buy-off efforts lest strikes scare investors away.

Hoánh Dinh Tran, Saigon

## Pang Rim Textile Mill Strike

More than 300 Vietnamese workers at a South Korean-owned textile mill struck for four days in January in a dispute over wages and an attack by a South Korean supervisor on a Vietnamese worker. The company reported that 1,300 workers stayed on the job.

The two sides agreed to a wage increase to end the strike, which reflects growing assertiveness among Vietnamese workers, especially since a labor law was passed last summer protecting the right to strike. The official newspaper *Lao Dong* says 32 strikes occurred nationwide from January through October 1994.

Wages currently range from \$30 to \$40 a month. The average worker in a Vietnamese state or private company gets about \$25 a month.

The same week, Vietnamese workers staged a two-day strike at a South Korean shoe factory in Song Be. More than 1,000 workers struck the Fine Industrial Co. to protest long work hours and low pay.

## Ford Seeks Cheap Slaves

The *Wall Street Journal* reports that Ford has set up a joint partnership with Song Cong Diesel Factory to construct an auto assembly plant which will build "Knock-down kits." Ford said it would hold the majority stake in this new venture.

The plant, to be located near Hai Duong, between Hanoi and the port of Haiphong, will produce 50,000 to 70,000 vehicles by the year 2000.

## Labor Unrest Hits Vietnam

While Hanoi's reformist economic policies have brought in much-needed foreign investment and sparked industrial renewal, Vietnamese authorities are now facing growing labour militancy on issues ranging from minimum wages to better working conditions.

Foreign companies trying to keep labour costs as low as possible are not the only target of the workers' wrath, with several state-run and Vietnamese owned enterprises also hit by labour unrest.

Despite still being wedded to socialist ideology, Vietnamese are not rushing to the defence of the workers. Instead they worry that labor militancy might scare away investors. According to official statistics, six per-

cent of the country's 34 million-strong workforce are jobless. But the Manila-based Asian Development Bank puts Vietnam's unemployment rate at 20 percent.

Hanoi is so far straddling the fence. Finance Vice Minister Pham Van Trong says "the government would like to remain a neutral body and not take sides in labour-management disputes."

The National Assembly, under pressure to deal with the rising number of industrial disputes, passed Vietnam's first labour law last June. The law grants workers the right to form unions and go on strike under certain conditions, and lays down rules for negotiations with management.

But the new law maintained the minimum wage level in foreign firms at \$35 a month despite long-standing demands from unions that it be raised to \$50. The minimum wage for workers in foreign companies used to be just that. But the government slashed it to the present level in 1992 to make Vietnam more competitive with the rest of South-east Asia.

Vietnamese officials argue that workers in foreign companies are better off than those in state-run enterprises where the minimum wage is around \$11 per month.

But the General Confederation of Labour argues that the minimum wage has to keep pace with rising costs of living especially in Ho Chi Minh City, where the influx of foreign capital has sent prices of various commodities soaring.

The confederation also says only 20 percent of the city's 252 enterprises begun with foreign capital are paying the minimum wage. Others illegally pay salaries as low as \$18 a month.

Low wages are not the only reason for labour unrest. Last year 600 workers at a South Korean-run firm in Ho Chi Minh City went on strike to protest against long working hours and the regular beating of employees for being slow on the job.

by Satyanarayan Sivaraman

## Workers reject blackmail

Workers at Packard's Tallaght plant in Ireland are resisting attacks on their pay and working conditions. Because workers voted to reject cuts in pay, longer hours, etc., they were threatened with lay-offs. Workers rejected the concessions for the second time Jan. 5 despite the threats.

Packard is a subsidiary of General Motors. In 1982 General Motors workers in the US agreed to wage cuts to protect their jobs but it did not stop General Motors closing down most of their plants in Michigan and moving to Mexico.

## Job-related deaths

17 U.S. workers are killed every day on the job, 6,000 every year; figures that do not include deaths from occupational illness. The *Chicago Tribune* (Jan. 8, p. 1) describes the Occupational Safety and Health Administration as "one of Washington's most inept regulators."

# Thai Workers Face Unsafe Workplace

In Thailand, a factory fire on March 10, 1993, killed 188 workers, the Hong Kong-based Kader Toy Co., which makes Cabbage Patch, Bart Simpson and Garfield dolls, had locked all the exits from a women's dormitory, which was located above the factory. The workers suffocated trying to claw their way out. The government declared March 10 to be National Safety Day, but nothing else changed.

Until 1991, Bangkok's sole occupational health clinic was run by Dr. Orapun Methadilokkul who had been trained in the US at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. That year, Methadilokkul examined four women employees of Seagate Technology, the California-based computer disk drive manufacturer whose plant outside Bangkok employs 16,000 workers, making it Thailand's largest employer. The women complained of headaches, fainting, muscle aches and fatigue, and died soon after. After Methadilokkul analyzed blood samples from more than 1,000 Seagate workers, she concluded that lead poisoning contributed to the deaths.

The government response was almost immediate. They shut the clinic and fired the 6-person staff. Methadilokkul became a staff physician at a local hospital.

Despite her reduced status – the hospital gave her a windowless office without facilities on the top floor of a nine-story building – a steady stream of sick workers continue to beat a path to her door. She sees more than 3,000 patients a year, most of them with symptoms of brown lung.

The Thai government recognized just 116 occupational disease claims in 1993. In many of those claims, the companies tied up the claim by suing the worker for slander.

# World Bank-IMF Attack Workers

A joint World Bank-IMF mission has visited Nicaragua to "grade" the government on its compliance with its pledges made to those agencies last April as part of the Economic Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) agreements.

The government hopes to reduce the Nicaraguan bilateral debt with Club of Paris member nations by 90%, but the negotiations must have the blessing of the IMF and World Bank. That blessing and a successful round of negotiations in February would also mean that Nicaragua would have access to \$520 million dollars in new loans for 1995. The cost of this money in human suffering will be great, however.

One of the conditions put on last spring's loan agreement with the World Bank was that Nicaragua deny internationally recognized labor rights contained in ILO (International Labor Organization) treaties. For example, the government promised the World Bank that it would guarantee that companies would be able to discharge workers "without any difficulty whatever."

# Nigerian Unionists Need Aid

The International Chemical and Energy Federation (ICEF) is appealing for unions to write the Nigerian military regime protesting the repression against the ICEF-affiliated PENGASSAN and NUPENG unions following last summer's strike in the oil industry.

Although the government has promised to respect union rights and to release unionists not charged with criminal offenses, to date there has been little progress. The UN's International Labour Organisation (ILO) recently ruled that the measures taken against Nigerian unions were excessive and violated workers' rights. The ILO called on the Nigerian government to allow the NUPENG, PENGASSAN and the Nigerian Labour Congress to regain possession of their union offices and bank accounts, repeal decrees barring elected union officers from exercising their functions, reinstating oil workers fired for exercising their right to strike, etc.

The ICEF is urging unionists to write: Lt. Gen. Oladipo Diya, Chief of General Staff, Abuja, Nigeria, and Dr. S. O. Ogbemudia, Minister, Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity, Federal Secretariat, Phase I, Ikoyi-Lagos, Nigeria. Letters should raise the following questions:

- Have the "sole administrators", the police and troops now been withdrawn from all offices of PENGASSAN, NUPENG and the NLC? If not, on what date will this withdrawal take place?
- Has these trade union organisations'

access to their bank accounts been fully restored? If not, on what date will it be restored?

- On what date will free and fair elections to the leadership of these organisations be held? Have all decrees been withdrawn that prevented the current duly elected leaderships of these organisations from exercising the functions of their office?

- Have all trade unionists detained in connection with last years events now been released? Do those released include the trade unionists listed to you by the ICEF's representative during the visit of the international trade union delegation last October, namely: PENGASSAN officers F.A. Addo (1st Vice-President and Chairman, Port Harcourt Zone) and F. Aidelomo (Chairman, PPMC and Group Chairman, NNPC); NUPENG General Secretary Chief Frank O. Kokori and NUPENG President Wariebi K. Agamene; NLC Chairman in Edo State, Deacon Olu Aderibigbe?

If any trade unionists are still being detained, what are their names? What is their place of detention? Are they being well treated and in good health? Do they have proper access to their families, their lawyers and their unions? On what date are they to be either unconditionally released or brought before a duly constituted court of law? Of what offences, if any, are they accused?

- Have the oil workers who were dismissed for exercising the right to strike been reinstated? If not, on what date will their reinstatement take place?

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The *Industrial Worker* has always been hard to find on news-stands. Soon it will be harder. We'd hate to lose touch. How about a subscription?



# Poverty Stalks American Workers

Poverty continues to worsen in the US. According to the Census Bureau, in 1993 - the second full year of economic recovery - the number of poor grew to more than 39 million, or 15.1% of the total population. This is the highest number since 1961, when 39.6 million or 22% were in poverty.

The number of children living in poverty in suburbia is rising faster than it is in the big cities or rural areas. For the population as a whole, the proportion of children living below the poverty line rose 49% from 1973 to 1992. In suburbia, the proportion rose 71% (70% of whom were white), while in rural areas the proportion rose 36% and in the inner cities, 56%.

The poverty rate overall is higher for children than adults. In the US as a whole, 15% of the population lives below the poverty line, while 25% of all children are poor. In suburbs, 9.7% of the people are poor; among children the figure is 13.8%.

## Single Mothers and Work

Not all single mothers are poor - but half of them are (compared to a 5% poverty rate for married couples.) Single mothers work for pay about as many hours per year as married mothers: about 1,000 hours a year (a year-round, full-time jobs logs 2,000 hours.) But less than full-time work for most women in this country does not pay enough to feed mouths, pay rent and provide care for children while at work. Since working mothers do not make enough to support their families, they supplement it -with either support from men or other family members or with government aid.

## Who is Poor?

Since the late 1960's the US has had an official poverty measure, an income threshold based on family size below which one's household is considered poor.

Poverty line for families of 1 to 5 people, 1993			
1 person \$7,363	work full time =	\$3.54	per hour
2 people \$9,414	"	\$4.52	"
3 people \$11,522	"	\$5.53	"
4 people \$14,753	"	\$7.10	"
5 people \$17,449	"	\$8.39	"

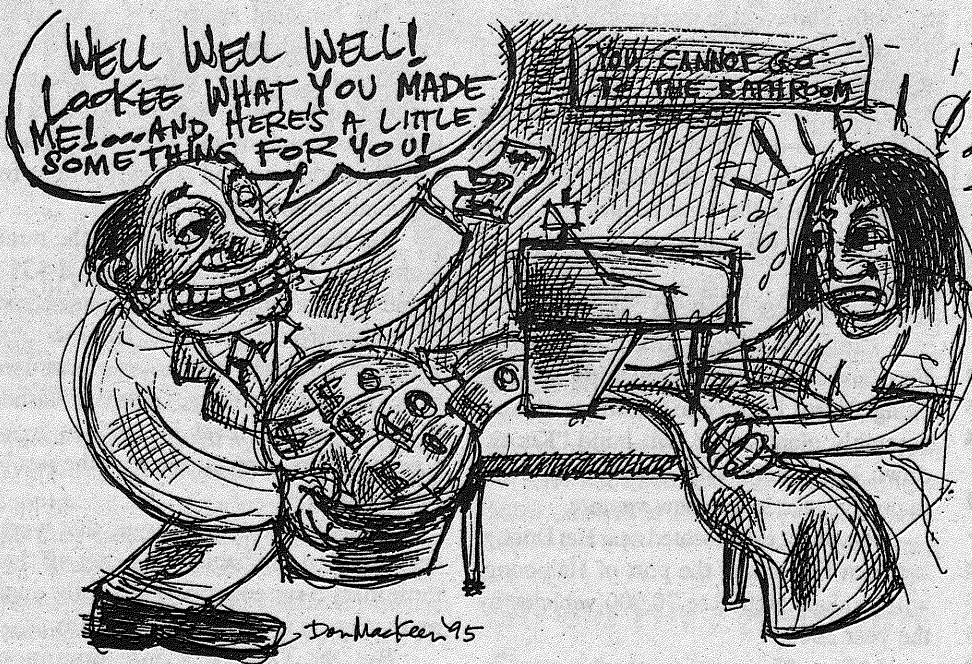
The poverty level was established by multiplying the food budget by 3, based on studies that indicated food was 1/3 of total family spending. Possibly the biggest problem with US poverty income threshold is that the government has not adjusted them for the changes in consumption patterns during the last 3 decades, in which the percentage of family income spent on food has declined as the percentages spent on housing, child care and medical costs have risen. Thus today calculating the poverty line as 3 times food costs underestimates the real cost of a minimal standard of living. Another problem with the current measure is that it is based on surveys that ask about annual income. Many families are poor for several months out of the year, but over the full year, their total income may be above the poverty line.

During the Reagan administration and periodically since then, jerks have attacked the poverty threshold as too high, since non-cash income, such as food stamps, is not included as income. If food stamps were included as income, the official poverty rates would be lower, but estimates do not reduce income by taxes paid. Social security payments, state sales taxes and local property taxes take a large, and as these are retrogressive taxes a disproportionately large, percentage of low income budgets. If food stamps and tax payments were accounted for, the poverty rate would probably be considerably higher.

## US Hunger

A report by the Bread for the World Institute found that hunger has risen sharply in the US. Between 1985 and 1990 the US

experienced a 50% increase of in the number of people who were hungry or ate too little "to provide them with the energy and nutrients for full productive, active and healthy lives," totalling 30 million people or 12% of the total population. Twelve million of the 30 million hungry US residents were under 18 while 3 to 5 million were over 65.



According to the institute, increasing the food assistance programs like WIC by 1% of the federal budget or by about \$10 billion would be enough to eliminate hunger in the US. This would be equal to about 3% of the "defense" budget or 1/3 of the CIA's annual funds.

## U.S. Economic Racism

For a brief period during the late 1960s and early 1970s, equal employment opportunity, affirmative action and equal housing laws helped raise black living standards and job opportunities. But since then enforcement of these statutes has weakened, as equality fades as a goal. Since the mid 1970s, real wages for blacks have fallen sharply, both in absolute terms and in relation to white wages; matching education levels, blacks earned 6% less than whites in 1976, and 18% less in 1989.

Among the factors explaining this has been the decline in manufacturing, which provided a large share of good paying jobs held by black males, and the decline in the value of the minimum wage, from \$5.28 per hour in 1980 to \$4.25 in 1992, in 1992 dollars. As manufacturing declined, the proportion of workers represented by union declined, with severe consequences for black workers, who had a higher percentage of union representation than whites (from 1983 to 1992, the proportion of black workers fell from 32% to 24% while the rate for whites fell from 22% for 17%.)

Median real weekly earnings for full-time workers declined from 1975 to 1992 by 12% for all blacks and 7% for all whites. But when the figures are broken down by sex, black men's earning declined 15%, white men's declined 12%, black women's declined by 1% and white women's rose by 8%.

As unemployment has risen, blacks have been the last hired and first fired. Among male teenage Afro-Americans, the jobless rate rose from 28% in 1973 to 40% in 1993. Despite claims that the difference between black and white rates of unemployment can be justified because whites have more "human capital" - education and experience - than blacks, black rates of high school graduation have risen relative to whites. In 1970, 74% of all persons 25 - 29 years old had high school diplomas and 55% of blacks the same age; in 1992 86% of

all persons 25 - 29 had high school diplomas and 81% of blacks the same age (US Statistical Abstract 1993). Yet a white high school graduate makes \$1.50 an hour more than a white high school dropout; a black high school graduate earns \$.50 an hour more than a male high school dropout.

## Job Retraining Programs Short-Change Unemployed

Most of the 1.7 million workers permanently laid off each years because of plant shutdowns or corporate downsizing - "rightsizing" it's coyly called - never sign up for job retraining. Economists say that those who do return to the classroom generally do not get jobs any sooner or that pay any better than those landed by former co-workers who skip retraining and find work on their own. About 1 out of 6 workers who receive job training quickly find jobs earning more than they did in their previous jobs. Most of the time, the jobs they train for are not there.

Most workers who complete retraining also have a nest egg of savings or a working spouse to support them while they are in school and out of the workforce. With more households headed by single parents, these workers may be effectively denied federal job training. A family can not live on unemployment insurance alone, and currently, only 1/3 of the unemployed at any given moment receive benefits.

## Boycott Disney

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters has called a boycott of the Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel in response to the hotel's "English Only" policy. The policy has been imposed on some 400 "back of the hotel" employees. Of these 400 employees, some 45% are Latino and another 45% are Haitian, the Teamsters report. "Their English speaking and comprehension skills are limited... Employees are given a 43-page employee manual written in English, and are required to sign a one sentence Spanish statement on the last page which states they have read and understood the manual and accept responsibility for following its rules.

"Under the hotel's policy, the workers receive all work instructions and discipline in English only and are forbidden from conversing with each in their own Spanish or Creole languages, even to convey or clarify work orders."

## IBM Demolition...

Valley area, with 4,000 of those layoffs at East Fishkill. There are currently 11,170 employees in the mid-Hudson buildings.

The company's cost-cutting strategy paid off, with profits increasing from \$1.8 billion for 3rd quarter 1993 to \$8.5 billion for 3rd quarter 1994. (The town's tax assessment of the East Fishkill plant is \$110 million, which readers may wish to interpret in relation to the profit level.)

IBM has also been very harsh (irony intended) with its top executives. In 1993 the Board removed CEO John Akers, under very impoverishing terms: All Mr. Akers was allowed to leave with was a severance check of \$2,500,000 based on his salary and "in recognition of 33 years of service," and additional severance pay of \$925,000.

I have no word on whether Mr. Akers is currently hungry or homeless.

— Mike Lepore (laid off March 1994 after 17 1/2 years with IBM)

## Working Women Stressed

While most of the 58 million US women in paid employment like their jobs, they are plagued by stress, see few chances for advancement and feel a distinct need for higher pay and health-care coverage, a US labor Dept. survey shows. Broadening health-care coverage and equalizing wages for women and men were the top two ways in which the women surveyed would change their work places.

The survey found that 43% of women who work part-time and 34% of working women over the age of 55 don't have health insurance. Women's pay is 71% of men's, according to the Labor Dept. Half of those surveyed agreed that "I don't get paid what I think my job is worth."

The first part of the survey was drawn from the results of 250,000 returned questionnaires and the second part from a phone survey. Since the 2,000 women contacted by the phone survey were chosen at random, the phone survey, though much smaller, was considered more scientific. Even so, the responses to the two parts of the survey were the same, except to the question, "What do you like best about your job?" The women who returned the questionnaire tended to be more educated and affluent; they responded that they liked their wages and benefits best. The phone survey, which included a wider range of working women, found that the women liked the companionship of their co-workers best.

There are possibilities for union organizing here.

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# One-Way 'Conversation'

On Dec. 19, Twin Cities axle line worker Randy Jacobs waited patiently until the end of Ford's annual "communications meeting" before politely asking a question of Plant Manager James Hill. Hill's response? "This is a one-way conversation. If you've got a problem take it up with your foreman."

"I couldn't believe the way he was treated," said body-decker Nick Harod. "People in chassis have a lot of good questions - like 'why do so many of us have jobs that wreck our bodies?' ... All I got out of the meeting is that they stole quite a bit from us last year (the plant was first in budget performance stealing \$10 million from the workforce which again suffered more than a thousand injuries), but ... they'll be screwing us again this year..."

Hill admitted management "has historically done a poor job of communicating in assembly." But now, "empowerment means everyone having a say-so."

Hill introduced UAW Local 879 President Rod Haworth who joined in relating the Ford 2000 scheme and proper tooling. Haworth doubles as an army colonel. "Empowerment ... separates companies that succeed from those that don't," Haworth said.

Hill thanked Rod for a great job: "No matter what Rod does he does it right."

What was on Randy Jacob's mind was probably more right for the chassis/trim

workers at the session. "I wanted to ask about how the jobs were set up for this changeover. It's a mess the way they did it. Then I was going to get into the workloads and injuries," Jacobs said.

Later Haworth said he couldn't talk about issues like job eliminations and work injuries at the "commo meeting" because "they (Ford) won't let me do that."

Empowerment.

The company brags about the plant being "First" in the system at coming in under budget. \$10 million due the plant's workforce was saved through job cuts while more than a thousand 879 members were being injured by their overloaded jobs.

GM has a lot more workers than Ford. We need more Ford workers not fewer GM workers "First in budget performance" means bonuses for the managers, and surgeries for the autoworkers.

"It got so bad" through Company programs like EI and QDS, adopted - even promoted - by the UAW which opened the floodgates of speedup, injuries, outsourcing, whipsawing and work rule giveaways...

Local members should demand more work from their delegates and some actual organizing between plants starting with the speedup-work injury issue because that's the most critical for the rank and file and the easiest issue to see. They should start by

asking why Ford assembly workers are being denied the strategy that is winning many new jobs at GM plants,

Last January, workers at GM-Shreveport compact pickup truck struck for six days. Before the strike production was 800 trucks a day with 2,300 workers. Good manning levels compared to Ford truck plants. The strike won 100 more jobs, helping assembly line workers even more.

GM Local 599 won 800 jobs in their strike, about 380 of them for the Buick assembly lines. 599 members get over 30 hours to build a car. Ford workers at Local 862 get less than half that. Hours per unit is a slippery measurement. It's affected by technology, overtime, sourcing, "float," absenteeism, etc. Still, the disparity between GM and Ford lines is striking.

Here are some comparative hours per unit as of August 1994 at Ford: 21.06, #879, St. Paul; 20.87, #325, St. Louis; 19.13, #551, Chicago; 14.9, #862, Louisville; 18.54, #882, Atlanta; 15.38, #900 Wayne Assembly; 20.26, #900, Michigan Truck, Wayne; 19.06, #91 Norfolk; 17.42, #980, Edison; 32.74, #36, Wixom.

Global competition means being crippled by repetitive motion injuries due to overloading of work assignments and line speedup. The competitive standards are set too high for the already overworked membership. UAW President Owen Bieber said 599's members were overworked and their strike won fair jobs. Why are Ford workers

being denied fairness?

Why are most Ford assembly workers being denied what Steve Yokich calls "Apache strikes" to hit the company when we have the upper hand to win jobs and stop injuries and outsourcing?

What if Ford assembly plant members demanded action on speedup? We should demand fair jobs, an end to work overloads, an end to work injury.

We have a massive problem with work injuries throughout the Ford Assembly system. Ford wants the union to "talk" about this problem in their "joint" committees. We need less talk and more action.

The injury problem could be addressed simultaneously in each assembly plant through the grievance procedure. Communication between locals can be maximized by phone, fax, and E-Mail. Local 599 had great bargaining leverage because of their parts manufacturing facilities. That kind of leverage and power can be had by the Ford Assembly plants standing together. Ford unions in Canada and Mexico should be included in developing this solidarity.

Imagine the power a union that includes autoworkers at all Ford assembly plants in North America would have in dealing with Ford on this most basic of union issues - decent, safe, healthy work for human beings.

Excerpted from an article by Tom Laney in *The Ford Worker* (59 Battle Cr. Pl., St. Paul, MN 55119).

Once known only to a select few, now everyone can learn...

# HOW TO GET RICH!

That's right, friends. I, Bill Comiskey, am going to tell you a fool-proof way to get rich. If you follow the simple steps in the next few paragraphs, *you will become richer than you ever thought possible!*

Now, the first thing you're going to ask is, "If you're so smart, how come you're not rich?" Well, friends, there is no correlation between intellect and wealth. Most of history's great minds have found wealth to be odious.

But that's enough philosophizing. Let's get on with making you rich!

Notice that you work every day, every week, every year. Now, here comes the most critical fact: **The truly rich don't work at all!** If you work and are not rich, and they don't work and are rich, what's the answer? That's right—you *did the work, but they got the money!*

It doesn't matter what you do for a living now, whether you work in a plant, drive a truck, punch data into a CRT or pick peas. You can get rich with the same formula thousands of other people have used to become fabulously wealthy.

*This is no gimmick.* This is not some shady real-estate scheme or a hot tip on the stock market or a fast horse. The rich make money in the stock market and with real estate, but only after they're *already* become rich. As for the horses, only a fool tries to get rich at the track.

Before I tell you how to get rich, let me tell you why you are not rich now. You need to know this, so don't skip down to the "how to" part. In order to understand "how to," you've got to know why.

Envision yourself as the worker in this example: You're working in a factory making fishing reels (it could be anything; we'll use reels as an example). You're paid \$10.00 an hour for an 8-hour day, 40-hour week, or \$400 per week. Ten dollars an hour is the most you can get. So if you want to make more money, you have to work more hours.

Let's say you take a second job, again at \$10 an hour, and you work an additional four hours each day. Now you're making \$600 per week. The only way you can make more money than that is to work more hours,

but working more hours doesn't make you rich, just dead.

Sure, you're making more money than you were before, but you still can't stop working and go lie on the beach for the rest of your life.

**Why not? Because as soon as you stop working, the paychecks stop.** Besides, \$600 a week isn't going to make you rich. And as a worker you are limited in how much money you can make by the number of hours you are able to work. If you never had to sleep and never stopped to eat and worked every available hour in the week, you still would not get rich; rich, that is, the way the ultra-wealthy are rich.

How to do it—

In order to make more money, you have to do one very simple thing—you *have to get someone else to work who will give you a portion of the money they earn.* Once you have done this, your income is no longer restricted to the number of hours in a week. If you can get 2 or 10 or 200 people to donate what they earn in 20 or 30 hours of their work each week to you, *your income will soar into the thousands of dollars each day.* Now you're ready to go shopping for that yacht!

Don't scoff at this and condemn it as a crackpot idea. This is the way rich people got rich and is the way they stay rich. And if you don't believe it can be done, prepare yourself for a shock: The rich are doing this to you right now. They've had you donating hours of your work to them every day for as long as you've been working. And that, fellow worker, is why *we're the working poor and they're the idle rich.*

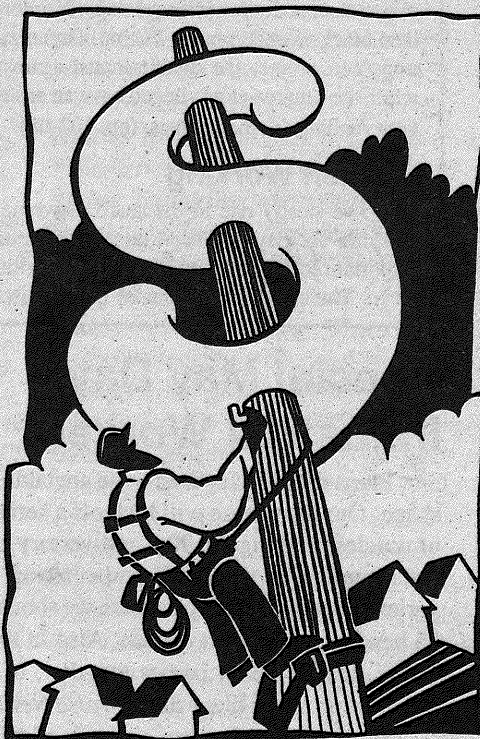
All right, you say, prove it.

OK, follow along. We'll continue with the fishing reels, but it doesn't matter if you're cutting meat, welding steel or typing letters, this example applies to you.

If you can make three fishing reels an hour and each reel has a value of, say \$10, you are producing a value of \$30 per hour. In the first 2 hours and 40 minutes of each day you have produced \$80 of value. That's fine! But you're getting paid \$80 for the day and you've still got 5 hours and 20 minutes

to work producing fishing reels *for which you will not get paid.*

If you've produced \$80 worth of product in the first 2 hours and 40 minutes, and you're paid \$80 for 8 hours of work, where does the value of the other 5 hours and 20 minutes go?



You are donating those hours of your labor every day to someone else's welfare. And *welfare* is the correct word. We hear a lot of complaining about welfare these days. Hardly anybody wants to pay welfare to the poor anymore, but rarely do you hear complaints about welfare to the rich.

Imagine that you've found several hundred of even several thousand workers who are each donating 5 or 6 hours per day to your income. *Think about the thousands and tens of thousands of dollars you would be raking in daily!*

This is not a fantasy. This is real life. There are people out there doing it right now. And we, the workers, are here, toiling away day after day, year after year, to keep them in Rolls Royces. In biology books they're identified as parasites. In America they're called privileged. So if you think

you can't make yourself rich, think about how many other people you've already made rich.

But there is a catch. (You knew all along there'd be a catch, didn't you?)

First, you need two traits: greed and callousness. You have to be greedy enough to be concerned only with your own comforts, and callous enough to not care about the poor bastards struggling to support you.

The second catch is that the misery you cause will eventually catch up with you. The very wealthy are less and less able to enjoy their stolen wealth. As the world becomes more aware of how they acquired their wealth and of their pillage, they have to keep a low profile. *Some live almost in hiding.*

Why, you ask, can't I get rich and the rest of the world leave me alone to enjoy it? *Because no one can get rich, No One, without stealing it from someone else.*

And therein lies the rub. If 500 people have to be poor so one person can be rich there will never be peace in the world.

Sociologists, criminologists, penologists and the police will give you 9,000 reasons for crime, and 9,000 ways to combat it. Their answers to the problem are more and bigger prisons, more executions, gun control - the answers and excuses go on and on. Very few people want to face up to and admit that the prime reason for most crime, terrorism and world turmoil is poverty, the poverty produced by capitalism.

So now you know how to become a millionaire. If, however, you lack the essential qualities of greed, callousness and cruelty, you have two other choices. You can continue to work without protest while the wealthy steal what you produce. Or you can work toward eliminating a system that allows parasites to live off the sweat, labor and anguish of millions of people.

Now that you know how the rich get rich, perhaps you don't want to be one of them after all. Not when you can live in a new society where everyone's life would be enriched.

(Adapted from a leaflet by the New Union Party, 621 W. Lake #210, Minneapolis MN 55408)



## 62 years ago in the IWW press

### A SIMPLE REMEDY

People are gloomy because they feel they are slaves — "some mysterious power holds them in bondage."

What is that power?

Lack of organization.

Note: It is a power in negative, their own weakness that enslaves them. Capitalism, for instance, has no power to enslave anybody. That last crack holds, no matter what you think — such a phenomenon extant, the power shifts to sickness, insanity or injury.

Lack of organization can and does enslave whole nations, to say nothing about the working class.

What's the remedy?

That is very simple: Organize — take out credentials and organize some more.

You won't?

Well then — starve, damn you, starve. And I'll starve with you, etaoinsrdlu, 7x!!oo\*\*!? — how do you yawn in print, editor? Do you hold your mouth this way ()? It shall never be said that "the great T-Bone Slim turned back just when starving was getting good." I'm with you to the last man, but I'm afraid I'll be too weak to lift a shovel at your funeral — you better dig your own grave while you've got strength and we'll roll you in it when the time comes — "decent burial" is my motto.

That part is all right but we must not forget I'm starving with you. I'd like to know where in hell you get the authority to starve me? I should think if you didn't have any consideration for yourself you'd have the decency to look after my interests a little — and the babies' — and organize enough to have a couple of fellow workers strong enough to cover you up in case you can't get accustomed enough to eatless days. Yeah.

*Industrial Worker*, July 5 1932

Reprinted in T-Bone Slim: *Juice is Stranger than Friction*

## Free Independent Chinese Unionists

Zhou Guo-qiang was arrested in March 1994 for printing T-shirts with slogans calling for respect of labor rights. Liu Jing-sheng is a chemical worker arrested in June 1992 for helping organize the Free Labour Union of China. Kuang Le-zhuang, Li Wen-min and Liu He-tang are journalists arrested June 1994 for organizing an independent labor association. The whereabouts of all five are unknown.

Please appeal to the Chinese government for their release: Premier Li Peng, Gup Wu Yuan, 9 Xi-huang-cheng-gen-bei-jie, Beijing Shi 100 032, People's Republic of China. or: Justice Minister Xiao Yang, Si Fa Bu, Xia-guang-li, Beijing Shi 100 016.

## From the desk of...

It's crazy how an offhand comment can become an issue. I mentioned in my first column that I thought it would be a good idea to have more time between election and taking office so that the process wasn't so chaotic. In my second I said I'd been informed that the balloting was currently being done at the latest dates allowed and that moving back the time of taking office wasn't necessary, just the moving forward of ballot mailing and counting. Now I've been informed that the ballot mailing and counting has indeed been done at the earliest allowed dates. Apologies to FW Rush. I should have known he'd be on top of such things. 2nd lesson as GST: check your information before commenting.

'Til next month, keep on truckin', organizing, and communicating.

Fred Chase, GST

# American Society in Maps & Pictures

**The State of the U.S.A. Atlas: The Changing Face of American Life in Maps and Graphics**, by Doug Henwood. Touchstone Books/Simon & Schuster, 1994, \$17.

This book features 35 abundantly illustrated full-color maps and tables illustrating the changing face of American life. Henwood doesn't satisfy himself with merely reproducing averages and totals; rather he provides the context necessary to understand what the numbers mean. The map on taxes, for example, not only illustrates average tax rates, it also shows that in 18 states the poorest 20% of the population pay more than twice as much in taxes (as a proportion of their income) than the richest 1 percent.

The maps, divided into four categories:

### Finance

What do financiers and landlords produce? ... In economic theory, the financial sector collects society's savings and allocates them to their most productive (defined as most profitable) uses. Even assuming, generously, that is what financiers, realtors and developers do, it must be noted that they take a very large cut in the process.... FIRE produces wealth for financiers. (p. 104)

### Labor

One generalization that can safely be made about working life in the U.S. — and the rest of the industrial world — ... is that uncertainty is on the rise.... All the institutions that traditionally acted as buffers between workers and the unsentimental mechanisms of the labor market have eroded — whether formal, like unions and collective bargaining contracts, or informal, like the implied lifetime job contracts...

Economists generally applaud this de-buffering as the elimination of "rigidities" that hamper the efficient functioning of the marketplace; workers with 30-year mortgages and orthodox bills view it quite differently...

Unionized white women and unionized black and Hispanic men all have higher weekly wages than nonunion white men, with unionized black women not far behind. Organizations can protect the discriminated-against, while the otherwise privileged have an easier time fending for themselves. (pp. 107-08)

### Women Working

The steady rise in the share of women working for pay has been one of the most important social developments in modern history... The occupational gender gap persists,

Demographics, Economy, Society and Government, are crowded with information. The "Personal Income" map, for example (pp. 44-45) offers a state-by-state illustration of average personal income in relation to the national average. Icons point out states where income inequality is particularly severe. A flagpole on the left shows that US income inequality is more severe than in other developed countries. And below the map, a series of human figures illustrate the fact that Hispanic women make only 37.5 percent as much, on average, as do white men.

The maps are followed by 8 pages of state-by-state breakdowns of the hard numbers that undergird the more visual presentation in the main section, and by 32 pages

but it is getting narrower... The news is not all good. Where earnings are concerned, recent gains by women have as much been the result of losses by men... At the top, gender integration is becoming the norm, but further down the status ladder, occupational segregation persists.

Women's increasing involvement in paid work has produced little change in the amount of their unpaid labor. Housekeeping and child care remain largely their responsibility and since full-time motherhood is something only affluent families can afford, arranging child care is one of the many challenges facing working women.... Child care is expensive, but not because the minders of children are highly paid: in 1993, they earned an average of \$6.69 an hour, 4% less than parking lot attendants, who earned \$6.95. (pp. 108-09)

### Taxes

New York has a reputation as a high-tax state, and Texas as a low-tax one... But... in 1991, the poorest fifth of Texans paid over 17% of their income to state and local taxpayers, compared with 14% in New York. But at the top, it was another story: the richest 1% of Texans paid just over 3% of their income in state and local taxes, while upper-crust New Yorkers paid 11.3%.... Only six states... squeezed their poor slightly less tightly than their rich...

The U.S. has a reputation as a low-tax country — on average... But the tax bite, measured as a percentage of gross pay, on the average married American worker with two children was deeper than in many European countries... And for their taxes, Europeans get free or cheap education, health insurance, public transit, and child care... (p. 110)

of explanatory notes that amplify the numbers and explain where they came from.

The maps and charts are often vivid and striking, and will no doubt appeal to those who have become accustomed to fast-paced, brilliantly colored, busy images. But sometimes the color and imagery obscures the arbitrary way in which some information is categorized. The "Sub-Urban America" map, for example, includes figures on the proportion of office space in various cities

## Book Reviews

outside the central business district. We are informed that 100% of Ontario (CA), Boca Raton (FL) and other cities' office space lies outside the "central business district." Either this means there is no business in these cities (clearly wrong) or no central district. The definitions determine the answers.

As a word-enthusiast, I prefer the notes that conclude the book. These explain where the numbers come from, but also explain the limitations and nuances which are too easily glossed over in pictures. (Excerpts from the notes accompany this review.)

Most of the information presented here is available in government documents (though the feds have been chopping away at the range of information they make available to the public for years, and may accelerate the destruction), and in a couple of years the government's *Statistical Abstract* will offer become more up-to-date (it is already more comprehensive).

But Henwood, who edits the invaluable newsletter *Left Business Observer*, places many of these numbers in their often-overlooked international context, and juxtaposes data in ways that demonstrate connections we are often socialized to ignore. And this slender volume brings together a wealth of statistical information in a format which many will find more convenient and more accessible than the raw data.

If you enjoy poring over government reports and statistical tables, this is probably not the book for you (though you might still find it handy for your less statistically inclined acquaintances). But *The State of the U.S.A. Atlas* should appeal to those who are uncomfortable with charts and figures, but are hungry for easily digestible information about the society in which we live.

— Jon Bekken

## Special May Day Industrial Worker

Plans for our May Day issue are taking shape. Our May issue will kick off a series of articles marking the 90th anniversary of the founding of the IWW and offering a variety of perspectives on where we should be heading in the next decade. Also in the works, if everything comes together, is a new edition of the *Wage Slave World News*.

We can provide extra copies in plenty of time for May Day. Bundles (in increments of 5, please) are 50 cents a copy. Special rates are available to IWW groups, delegates and branches. Orders for May Day bundles should be received (to our Chicago address, please) by March 20th to allow time to adjust our press run.

May Day greeting ads are a long-standing tradition, offering you an opportunity to demonstrate your support of this paper and our message of revolutionary industrial unionism. Greeting ads (no commercial advertising accepted) should be received by March 15th.

Rates are: \$10 for a 2" ad (1 column), \$25 for a 4" by 5", and \$50 for a quarter page. We can set it up for you, or you can send in camera-ready copy.

### Donate to the Industrial Worker Sustaining Fund

## Sabotage Growing Problem for Bosses

Computer problems caused by rebellious employees, natural disasters or technological glitches hurt more than 25% of American companies in the last two years, according to a survey released by management consultants Ernst and Young. Many companies reported losses exceeding \$100,000, and ten companies reported losses of more than \$1 million.

35% of the losses cited in a survey of 870 companies were caused by workers who corrupt their employers' files, infect office computers with software viruses and commit acts of physical destruction on office machines. Most were believed to be striking back at their employers in response to pressures emerging from "downsizing."

When businesses fire workers to maximize profits, work is often moved from costly large computers at a central location to far less expensive (but more vulnerable) desktop machines scattered about the workplace. Often companies also cut back on their computer security people as part of their cost cutting.

Executives reported that they feared security breaches by their workers more than by competitors. Ernst and Young say new technologies increase vulnerability.

## American Freethought

**Freethought on the American Frontier**, edited by Fred Whitehead and Verle Muhrer. Prometheus Books (700 E. Amherst St., Buffalo NY 14215), \$24.95, 314 pages.

"Money, transportation, manufacturing, coal, oil, land and lumber, we have chartered away, which has gone to the trusts. The trusts stand on chartered rights. Take away the chartered rights of any trust or monopoly on earth and it would melt like a snowball below. But we are granting more chartered rights, creating more monopolies and then we whine about the trusts. Aren't we a fool set of voters? They are protected by the Star Spangled Banner. That flag protects capital today better than it protects humanity. It drafted the boys but asked the money to volunteer. See the difference?"

— S.P. Dinsmoor, civil war veteran.

This passage from *Freethought on the American Frontier* is one of several that point out how the American people have been fooled by political and economic bosses. Most of the passages, however, deal with how people were fooled by religion.

Nearly 40 writers are featured, some famous like Sinclair Lewis and Mark Twain. Some pleading for rational criticism of the religious myths that have ruled American social life through the years. Others cried



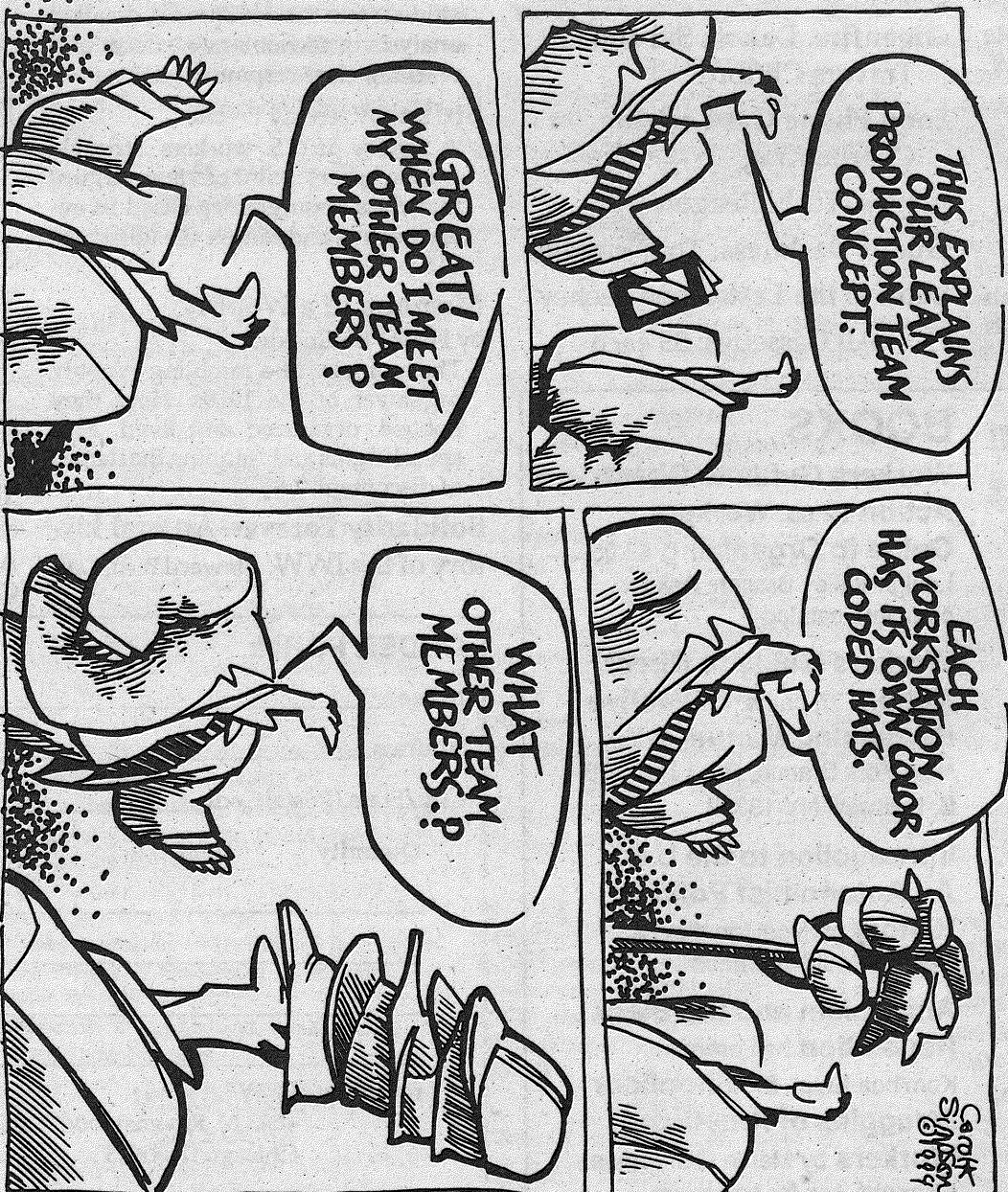
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March 1995  
#1577, Vol. 92 #3  
One Dollar

# Industrial Worker



## Strike Against Overtime

British Wobs Organizing Teachers,  
Couriers; Poverty Stalks Workers;  
Bosses Demand Work for Free

Having downsized their work force by the wholesale firing of tens of thousands of their employees, many major corporations have made the brilliant discovery that if they want to increase their production and profits, the employees who remain on the job will have to work harder and faster.

The lead story in the *Wall Street Journal* of Dec. 23 heralds the new campaign with the headline: "The Latest Big Thing At Many Companies Is Speed, Speed, Speed"

"Boosting speed is basic to corporate re-engineering, the trendy technique of using technology to reorganize operations," the *WSJ* states, noting that it is being applied to service industries as well as manufacturing. It cites the case of Westinghouse Electric Corp., which is pushing its finance staff to cut in half the time it takes to issue an invoice - a substantial savings in labor costs. In their effort to ratchet up the tempo of production, some companies are instituting time studies of every step a worker takes in creating a product or service with the object of eliminating or modifying steps in the process - a procedure known as Taylorism, which employers used extensively in the 1920s. For example, Reynolds & Reynolds Co. of Dayton, Ohio, found that employees

respond poorly to the pressure of having to work faster to meet company-imposed deadlines. There can be an increase in illness, absenteeism and accidents. There is also the possibility that quality control will suffer as workers become overtaxed and resentful. In the rush to gain a competitive advantage, companies may produce items before they are fully tested or suffer breakdowns in their production lines. A few months ago, IBM had to recall one of its software products for personal computers because of serious defects after rushing it to market to meet an unwisely imposed deadline.

Meanwhile, the relentless drive to "downsize" through mass firings continues. Matel Inc., the fast-growing toy maker, greeted the Christmas season by announcing that it would discharge 1,000 employ-

## Reinventing Speed-up

At the same time, the company in-creased its dividends to stockholders, boasting record sales and profits for the year. With the Clinton Administration and the Republican Congress copying the

downsizing operations of Big Business and competing as to who can cut government spending - and government jobs - the most, it does not look like a happy new year. By Harry Kelber

### Economy Up, People Down

Conventional indicators look pretty healthy. GDP growth is averaging around 4%, good if not great by historical expansion standards. Employment growth is also pretty brisk, with over a quarter of a million new jobs being created every month. That

## Be a Wobbly - Join the IWW...

To join mail this form with a check or money order to IWW, 1095 Market St. #204, San Francisco CA 94103, or contact your local delegate. Dues: Monthly income under \$800: \$5 per month; Income \$800-1700: \$9 monthly; Over \$1700: Dues \$12. Initiation Fee: Same as one month's dues. A low-income worker can join for as little as \$10.

I affirm that I am a worker, and that I am not an employer.  
I agree to abide by the constitution and regulations of this organization.  
I will study its principles and make myself acquainted with its purposes.

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